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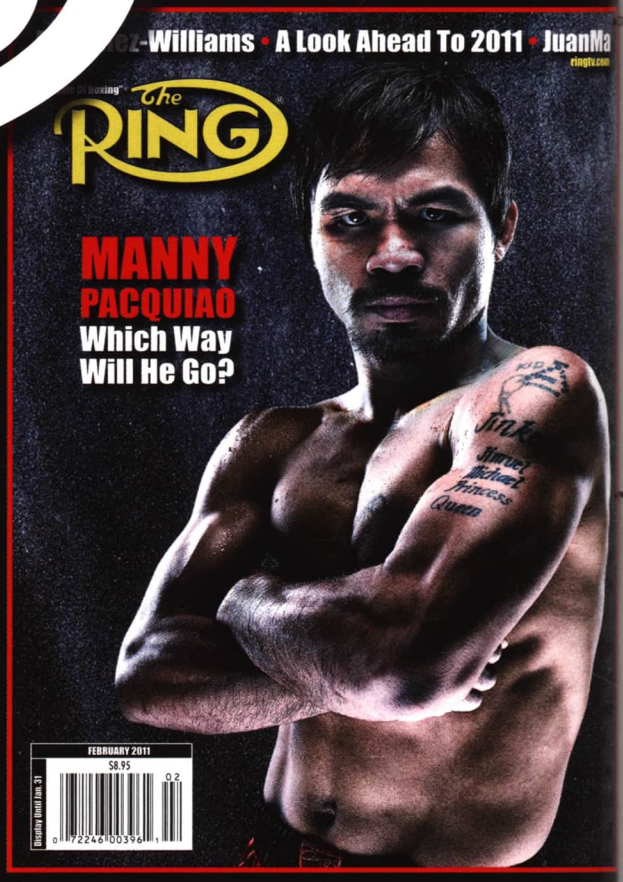

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All We Need Is A Great Fight

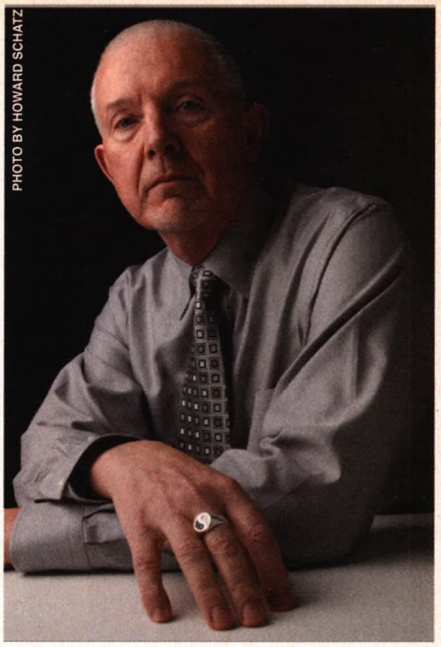
PHOTO BY HOWARD SCHATZ

Boxing's problem isn't that there aren't great fights anymore—there are plenty of them. They're just not the ones you pay $60 to watch on pay-per-view. In recent years, most of the great fights have come a rung or two down the financial ladder, some even lower than that.

A handy barometer for this sort of thing is THE RING's annual Fight of the Year award, a tradition that goes back more than 60 years. There was a time when epic fights such as Ray Robinson vs. Carmen Basilio, Joe Frazier vs. Muhammad Ali, and Marvin Hagler vs. Thomas Hearns took the honors, but not lately.

Today's biggest box-office stars—Manny Pacquiao, Floyd Mayweather, and the Klistchko brothers—have never been involved in a Fight of the Year.

You have to go all the way back to 1996, when Evander Holyfield stopped Mike Tyson, to find a pairing that represented the sport's top moneymakers participating in the FOTY.

Many of the fights that have won the laurels since '96 have been truly magnificent, but they have featured fighters such as Arturo Gatti, Micky Ward, Emanuel Burton, Paulie Ayala, Johnny Tapia, Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, Diego Corrales, Jose Luis Castillo, Somsak Sithchatchawal, Mahyar Monshipour, Israel Vazquez, Juan Manuel Marquez, and his brother, Rafael.

Over the last 14 years, these men have given us the very best boxing has to offer. But none of them—not even Barrera or Morales—were crossover stars the way Mayweather and Pacquiao are worldwide and the Klitschko brothers are in Europe.

There's no getting around the fact that today's leading attractions have not been giving value for money on a consistent basis for a long time now.

Even Pacquaio, an exciting fighter if ever there was one, has not been involved in a thriller since his 2009 bloodbath with Miguel Cotto. Three subsequent one-sided decision victories have left even the most devout Pac-Maniac feeling a bit flat.

Mayweather hasn't participated in a remotely compelling fight since Jose Luis Castillo pushed him to the brink in April 2002. While Floyd and Oscar De La Hoya created the richest fight ever, as I wrote at the time, they "produced a fight respectable enough to appease but not enthrall." Appeasement is scant compensation for an event that generated $120-million in PPV revenue.

As far as the methodical Klitschkos are concerned, by now, we know not to expect too much in the way of edge-of-your-seat excitement when they enter the ring. But for the record, Wladimir's last genuinely riveting contest was in '05 when he came off the floor to decision Sam Peter. As far as Vitali is concerned, you've got to go all the way to '03 and his TKO loss to Lennox Lewis to find a spellbinding encounter featuring "Dr. Ironfist."

The injustice in all of this, of course, is that the fighters who have been creating the masterpieces in recent years are not as famous as those cashing the juiciest paychecks.

What we need to right the ship is a major match where the payoff in the ring parallels the purses of the participants, which brings us to the Floyd Mayweather-Vic Ortiz bout. True, that's asking a lot when defensive wizard Mayweather is one of the combatants. But if "Vicious Vic" lives up to his nickname and attacks with bad intentions, the Sweet Science just might get what it needs—a fight that sparkles as brightly as the spotlight that illuminates it.

And if Ortiz-Mayweather turns out to be another letdown, take heart. Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez will have their chance to shift the paradigm later in the year.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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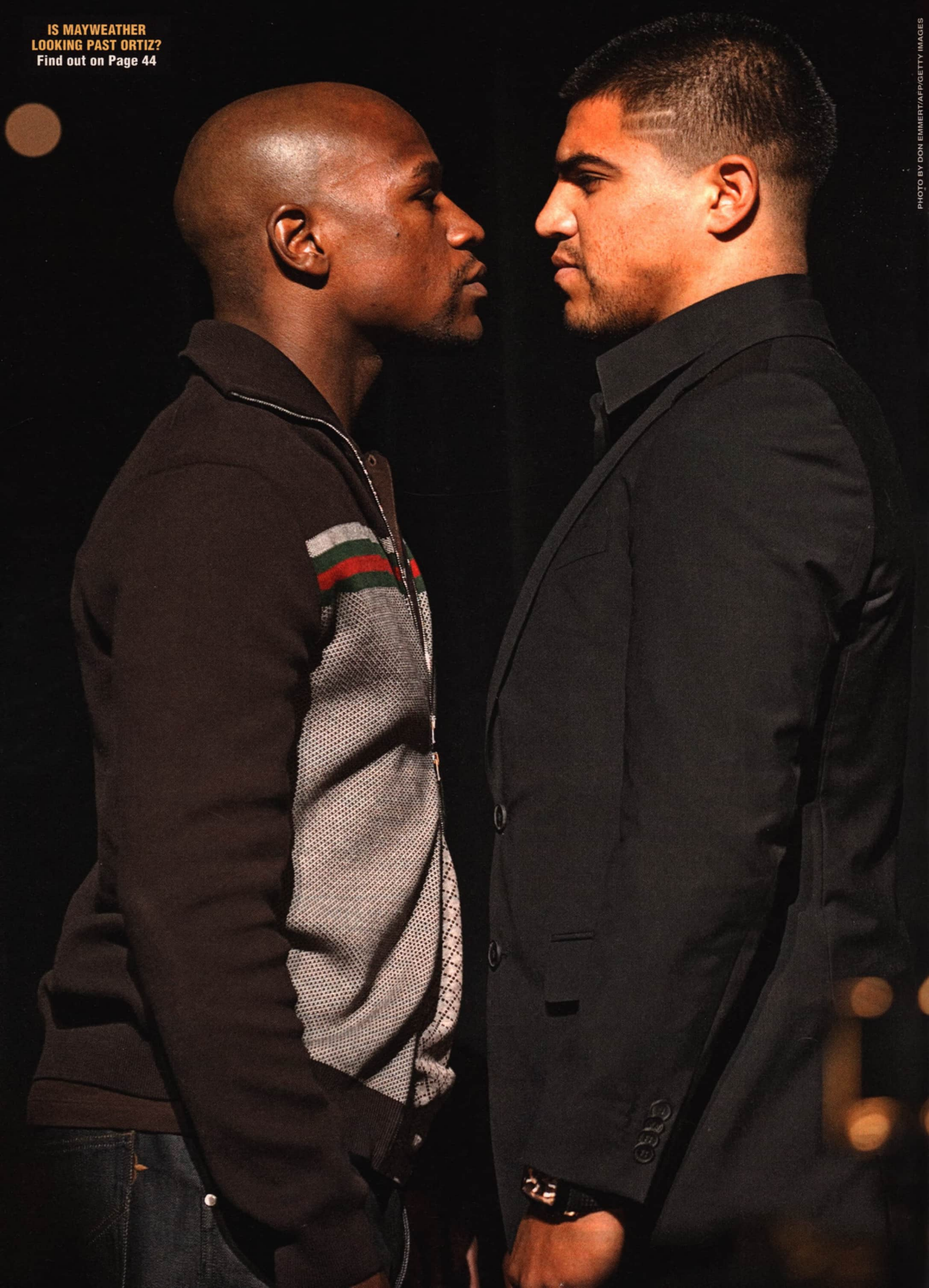

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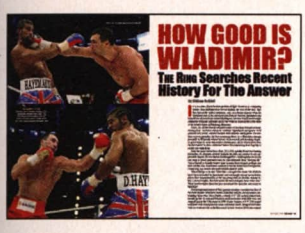

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The Ring Searches Recent History For The Answer
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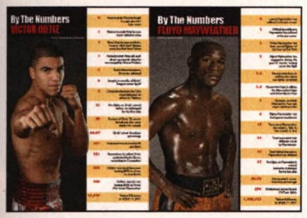

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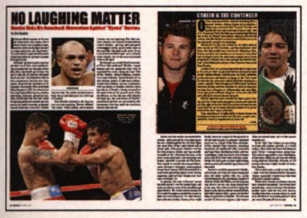

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Ortiz can draw strength from the fact that many fighters in boxing's long history have achieved what he's attempting. Ten such fights are profiled here.
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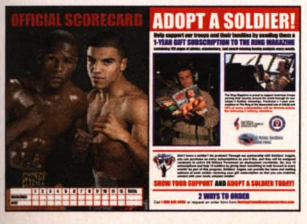

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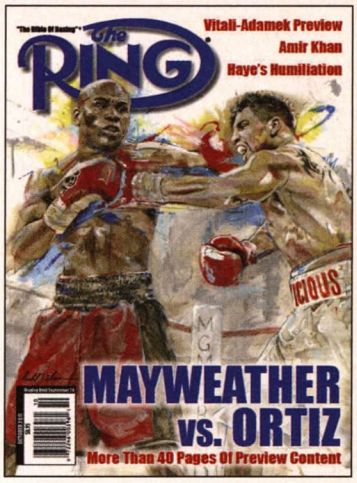

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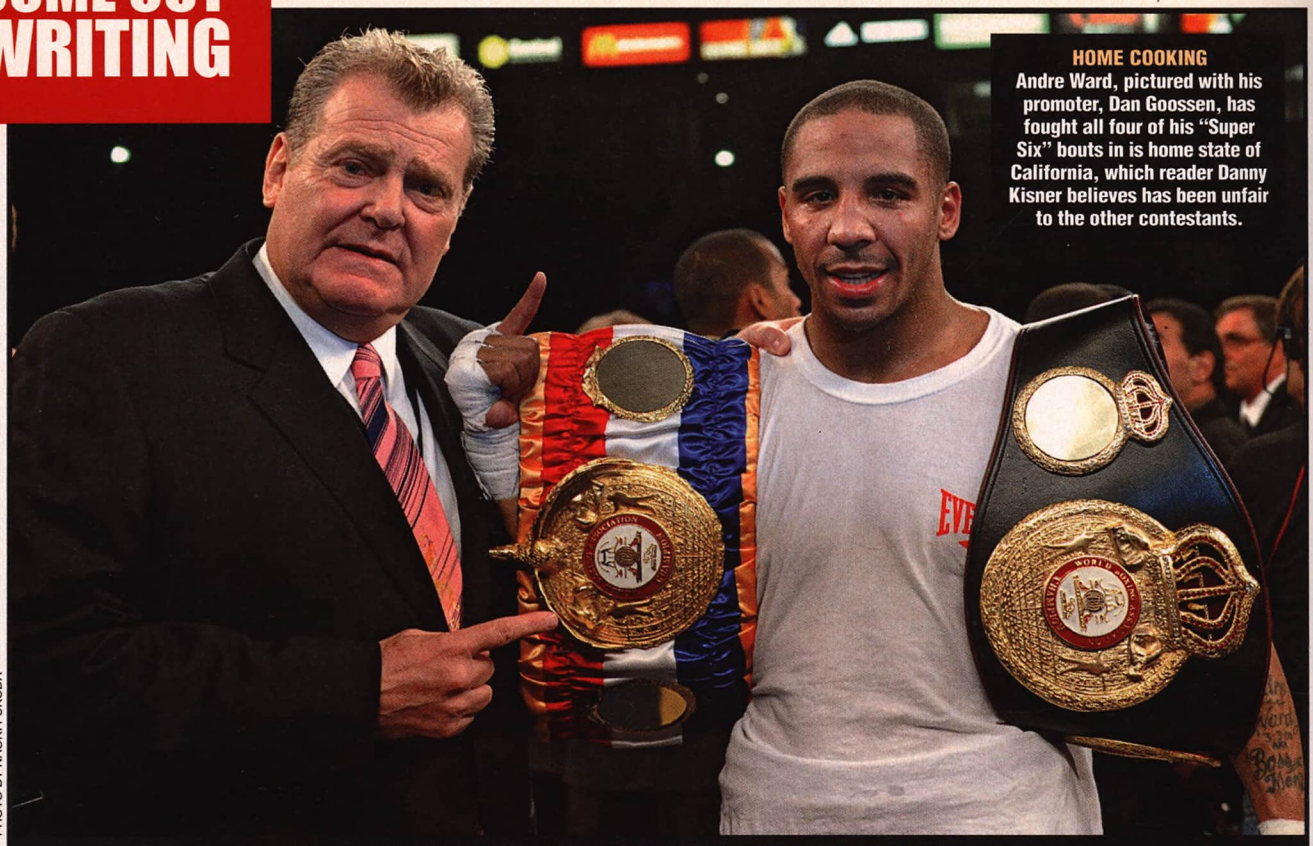
OPENING SHOT

MUG SHOT
Amir Khan demonstrates the age-old art of face flattening during his junior welterweight bout with Zab Judah. While Judah's nose soon popped back to its original shape, the Mandalay Bay cleanup crew found his bellybutton under a third-row seat after Zab was knocked out by a right to the beltline in the fifth round.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA



HOME COOKING
Andre Ward, pictured with his promoter, Dan Goossen, has fought all four of his "Super Six" bouts in is home state of California, which reader Danny Kisner believes has been unfair to the other contestants.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Unfair Advantage

Showtime's "Super Six" tournament should be called the "Andre Ward Tournament." From the beginning, the rules stated that each boxer was to fight in the other guy's hometown as well as his own. Every one of the original six boxers fought in his opponent's hometown except Ward. This is discouraging and unfair to the other boxers. Rules should be followed, and, if not, why have any rules at all? Fair is fair, so Ward should have to fight Carl Froch in England.

DANNY KISNER
Glen Burnie, MD

Editor's note: Sorry, Danny, you make a good point, but the Ward-Froch bout will not take place in England. Instead, it is scheduled for Atlantic City, New Jersey, on October 29, where Froch won a decision over Glen Johnson to earn the right to fight Ward in the "Super Six" final.

No Lesson Learned

Regarding the Paul Williams-Erislandy Lara fight: I'm not going to moan about the horrendous decision in Williams' favor. Instead, I'd like to express my disappointment in Paul and his handlers because they had learned absolutely nothing from the humiliating Sergio Martinez loss last year. I cannot believe Paul was getting hit with the same punch over and over again that rendered him unconscious against Martinez. Did he and his trainer (George Peterson) even watch a replay of that Martinez loss? Seriously, I don't know what kept Williams up all night, but, if that was Martinez in the other corner, I think THE RING would literally have had the same Knockout of the Year result for the second year in a row. If Williams wants to continue his career, he seriously needs to change his ways. What worked before obviously isn't working now, and, if he doesn't set things right, he could get seriously hurt.

BERNARDO AGUIRRE
Sydney, Australia

Let's Hear It For The Little Guys

Congratulations to THE RING for beaming the spotlight on junior flyweight champion Giovani Segura in the August 2011 issue. I think his interview was one of the most interesting ever published in THE RING magazine. The sad fact is, of course, that boxing's lightest divisions still remain below the radar of many fans, resulting in purses and fame that remain relatively scanty. Hopefully, Segura and others in his weight stratum will soon rectify this situation and reap the financial rewards and renown they so richly deserve.

RICHARD HAGLUNG
Mound City, KS

PHOTO BY JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

NO-HOPE HAYE

Once the opening bell rang, loudmouth challenger Haye quickly became another victim of heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko's confounding style. Readers Steve Lennox, Brad Morris, and Rob Maye were among the many who wrote to rip Haye's dismal performance.

Haye Humbled

David Haye is a bum with a big mouth and no heart. He should apologize for his pathetic performance against Wladimir Klitschko.

STEVE LENNOX
Naperville, IL

My wife has this hydrangea bush she's been looking forward to watching bloom. I catch every local boxing card, buy every pay-per-view, and subscribe to every channel that supports boxing. I just watched the Wladimir Klitschko-David Haye bout. Suddenly, lawn chairs and hydrangea are looking pretty good to me.

ROB MAYE
bobby13452@hotmail.com

David Haye set a new low in excuse making after his fight with Wladimir Klitschko by actually removing his shoe and showing everyone his purportedly injured little toe. Poor fellow. He may want to look at a video of Muhammad Ali's first fight with Ken Norton, when Ali fought from round two on with a broken jaw. Or, more recently, at Arthur Abraham's war with Edison Miranda, where Abraham pulled off a win with his jaw broken in two places. An injured toe is no excuse for refusal to engage a bigger, stronger, faster man, especially compared with warriors who went to hell and back. It's called boxing, David.

BRAD MORRIS
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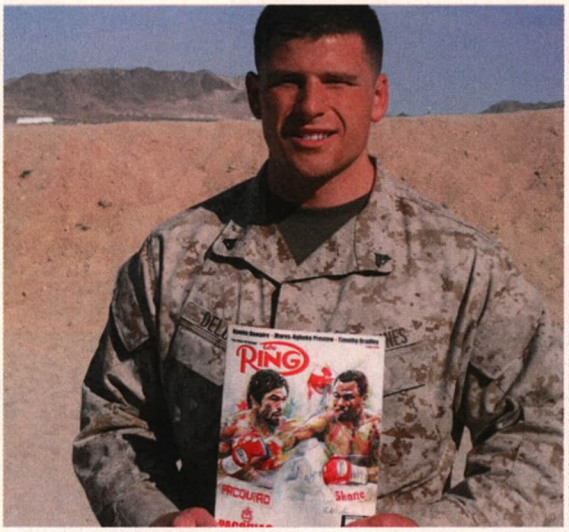

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DELUCA FAMILY

A LITTLE PIECE OF HOME

Corporal Mark DeLuca displays a copy of The Ring, which his family sends him every month. Mark is an undefeated super middleweight prospect who put his boxing career on hold to join the USMC.

A Marine's Favorite Magazine

My son, Mark DeLuca Jr., is a professional boxer from Boston. He had/has a very promising career thus far. He was a three-time Amateur National Champion and is 8-0 (5) as a professional. He enlisted in the USMC to fight for his country and has put his boxing career on hold to go to Afghanistan. We send him his favorite magazine, The Ring, every month, which gives him the motivation to keep pushing and fighting both in war and the ring.

MARK DeLUCA SR.
Whitman, MA ■

TO WRITE THE RING

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Klitschko: The Movie

Lennox Lewis appears for just a few seconds in the new documentary *Klitschko*, and he gets right to the point. "The two brothers should fight each other," says the ex-heavyweight champ.

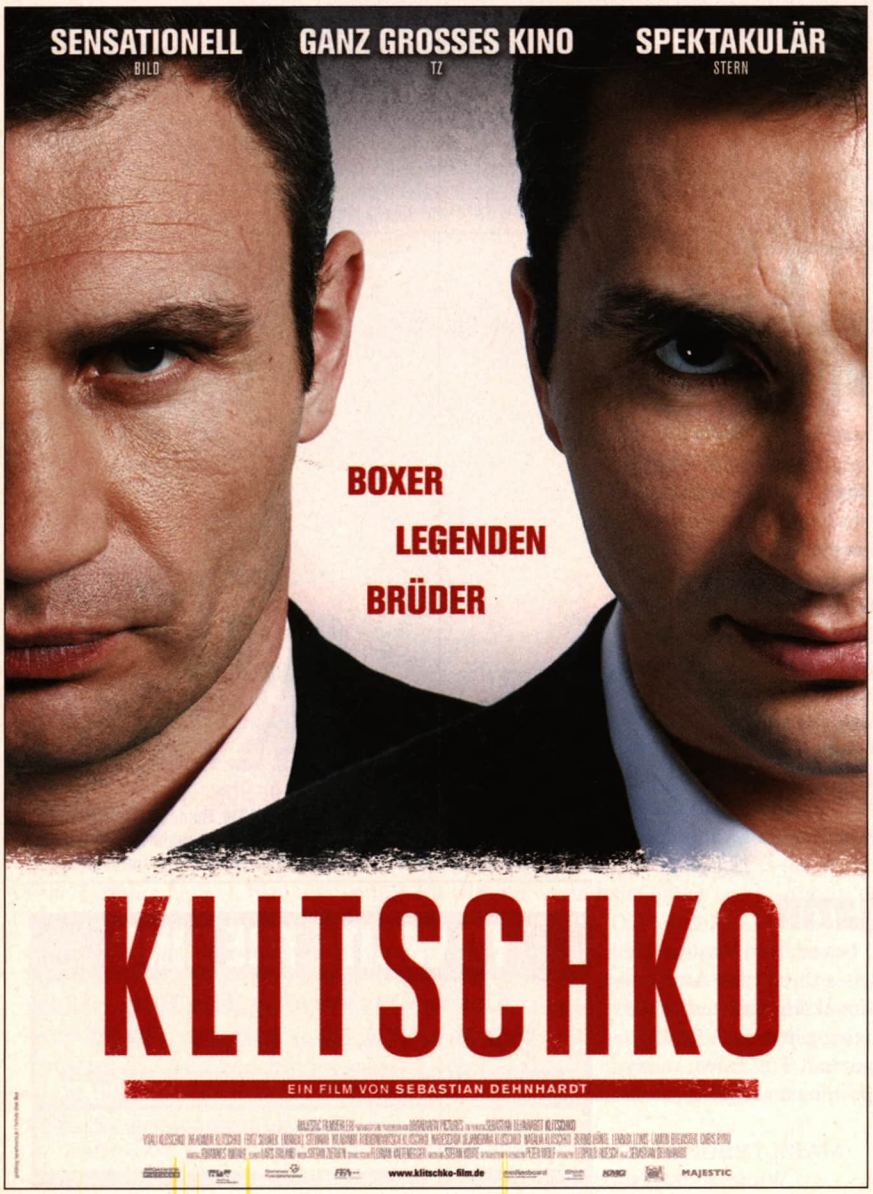
For a decade, lots of people have been saying the same about Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko, who now hold all the heavyweight titles. But the person with the last word in the matter has already made up her mind. She says it's never going happen.

Nadezhda Klitschko gave birth to Vitali in 1971 and Wladimir five years later. In director Sebastian Dehnhardt's documentary *Klitschko*, she says her boys have pledged that they'll never lay a glove on one another, no matter how big the payday.

As she puts it, "I said to my sons, 'The same blood flows through your veins. Never do that! Not even just for fun.'"

The brothers' refusal to square off has been one of the heavyweight division's more intriguing stories in recent years. But *Klitschko*, which opens in October, makes clear that to these two muscular Ukrainians, a mother's wishes mean a lot more than the pleas of promoters, journalists, and fans.

POSTER BOYS
Both halves of the two-headed heavyweight king



Dehnhardt's film is packed with ring footage and it also devotes a fair amount of time explaining the various factors that made the Klitschkos who they are.

As children growing up before the fall of the Soviet Union, the brothers were taught that America was a terrifying land of decadence and cruelty. But Vitali recalls having a very different impression when he made his first trip to the United States as a teen. He fell in love with Coca-Cola and was overwhelmed by the many varieties of cheese. He likens that initial visit to "going on a trip to the moon."

For observers who've spent a decade watching the Klitschkos, the most fascinating parts of the film might be those that examine the differences between Vitali and Wladimir. Early in the film, Wladimir says of his older brother, "He was born a fighter. I became one." One of their earliest trainers suggests that the

THE EARLY YEARS
Vitali and Wladimir with their parents, Nadezhda and Volodymyr

slightly bigger Vitali is better equipped to take punishment, while Wladimir is quicker to pick up new concepts. And Chris Byrd, who fought both Klitschkos, says Vitali is a bit cagier, but Wladimir hits harder.

The film also examines the most trying periods of the Klitschkos' fighting careers. Wladimir, for instance, faced his toughest test in 2004, when Lamon Brewster knocked him out. As they recount in the film, Vitali thought it was time for his brother to retire, while Wladimir was determined to keep boxing. Fourteen-straight wins later, Wladimir clearly made the right call.

Though it follows Vitali and Wladimir from training to the ring and, at least once, to the hospital, *Klitschko* provides no stunning revelations about their professional or personal lives. But as a means of explaining the happenings in the heavyweight division over the last 10-plus years, the film is an absorbing document—a good starting point for new fans and a solid refresher course for diehards.

—Kevin Canfield

NICK CHARLES, 1947-2001

This is what I remember about the first *ShoBox* broadcast: We were seconds away from our live air time of 5 p.m., and I was nervous; I feared our super-sensitive microphones were picking up the sound of my rapid heartbeat.

In fact, I had nothing to worry about. I was standing next to Nick Charles, which meant everything was going to be okay.

Everything was better than okay until 2009, when Nick was diagnosed with stage-four bladder cancer. On June 24, he died at his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Nick was 64.

How perfect a partner was Nick? He was an award-winning announcer; he loved boxing; he was the most interesting man I had ever met; and he became my best friend.

For the nine years that Nick and I teamed at Showtime and during our previous work together at CNN, the highest praise came when a viewer complimented me on the chemistry I shared with my broadcast partner.

Then again, if you had no chemistry with Nick Charles, you had probably been mummified.

Nicholas Charles Nickeas was born in Chicago. The son of a cab driver, he was very much a self-made man. In that sense, he easily identified with boxers.

Nick's first job in television came in Springfield, Illinois. Sports anchor jobs in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. preceded the move that would largely define his career: In 1980, Nick moved to Atlanta and joined Ted Turner's startup network, CNN.

Nick spent two decades there, anchoring for 17 years with Fred Hickman and covering every major sports event. Boxing and horse racing were his favorites.

I first met Nick at the superfights of the early 1980s. Long before he became a full-time member of the boxing media, he was a presence at ringside. Nick instantly connected with his subjects, as evidenced by his lengthy friendships with Sugar Ray Leonard, Evander Holyfield, George Foreman, Mike Tyson, and others.

In the *ShoBox* years, he got to know every cutman, trainer, judge, ring announcer, writer, and fan who would shake his hand and share a minute. His favorite saying was "You judge a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him."

Nick lived by that. Just ask anyone who ever met him.

Upon hearing his diagnosis, Nick chose not to shrivel up. Instead, he went public with his battle, inspiring everyone in boxing and beyond. His message was simple: Do what you love, regardless of the circumstances, and love those you're closest to.

Nick is survived by his wife Cory, daughters Melissa, Katie, and Giovanna, and son Jason.

Boxing will miss Nick Charles, but boxing *people* will miss him more.

—Steve Farhood

BEST BUDDIES
Farhood and Charles in 2004

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

BOXING BOOKSHELF

When heavyweight champion Joe Louis was riding high in 1940, Milwaukee boxing savant Tom Larkin, who had seen them all going back to the Sullivan era, raised eyebrows by proclaiming that "The Brown Bomber" wouldn't have lasted three rounds against Peter Jackson, and "wouldn't have hit Jackson with a handful of oatmeal."

Bob Petersen doesn't go there in *Peter Jackson: A Biography of the Australian Heavyweight Champion, 1860-1901*, which is one of many laudable things about this impressive contribution to boxing scholarship and history. Too many recent bios of old-time ring legends end with a hypothetical matchup of their subject and the Klitschkos or some other current standard-bearer—an exercise as pointless as it is geeky.

Petersen's book is neither. It serves up straight history, meticulously researched and skillfully and colorfully narrated, painting an absorbing portrait of the erudite, upstanding native of the West Indies who became such a credit to his race that Jackson's picture had a place of honor in the home of an aged Frederick Douglass, the famous former slave turned crusader for equality.

As a boxer, he was "the daddy of them all," according to Bob Fitzsimmons, who apprenticed under "Professor Jackson" at a boxing academy in Australia. When they held the heavyweight title, John L. Sullivan and James J. Corbett wanted nothing to do with Jackson in the ring, the former because he was a foaming racist and Corbett because he found out what Jackson could do in their famous 61-round "No-Contest" fight in 1891 (whose action, Petersen reports, was pretty much compressed into the first 31 rounds).

A gifted multi-sport athlete and fashion plate whom Petersen credits for introducing the "Australian crawl" swimming stroke and the sleeveless singlet to the USA, Jackson fought only exhibition bouts from 1892-'98. "Everybody was scared of him," writes Petersen, "the mice not daring to approach the lion."

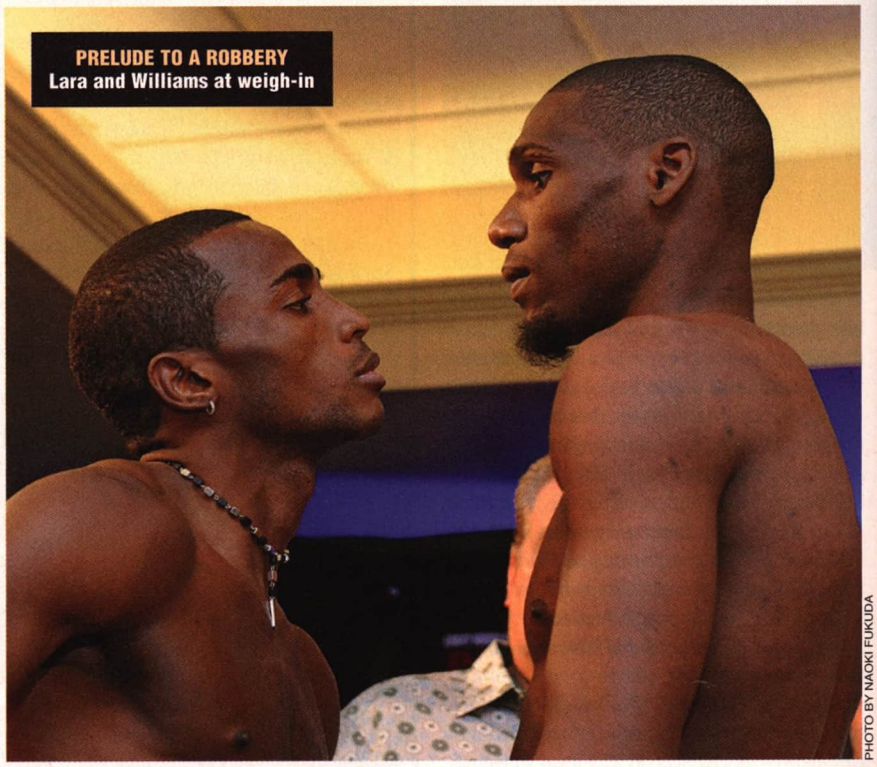
By the time Jim Jeffries knocked him out in 1898, Jackson was on the road to the alcoholism—he was a "Stark Naked," or straight gin, man—that branched off into the tuberculosis that ended his short life. (His tantalizing final words: "Corbett understands me—if I should ever see him again.")

A London tabloid called Jackson "A paragon of the Ethiopian Race." The largely self-taught, polished boxer and Shakespeare-spouting gentleman himself aspired to be "a man among men." Thanks to this paragon of sports biographies, Peter Jackson wins again.

—Pete Ehrmann

You Be The Judge

Former Las Vegas boxing judge Chuck Giampa provides analysis of officials and scorecards of fights in which he is not directly involved.



PRELUDE TO A ROBBERY
Lara and Williams at weigh-in

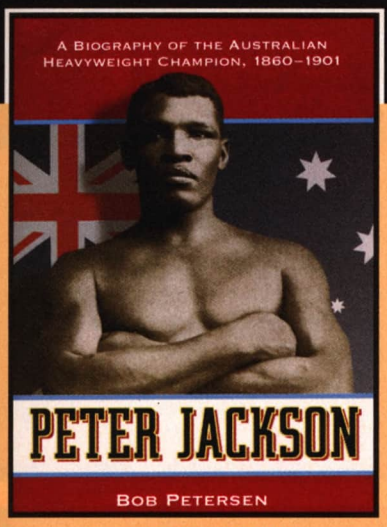
PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

When the scores were read at the conclusion of the Erislandy Lara-Paul Williams 12-rounder in Atlantic City on July 9, 2011, I couldn't believe that Williams had been awarded the majority decision. The theme of my originally planned article dramatically changed when I read the statement written by New Jersey commissioner, Aaron Davis, stating that his "agency had concerns about the final scores," which prompted the New Jersey commission "to conduct a full review of the scoring." Davis stated that the commission was "unsatisfied with the scoring of the contest even after hearing the explanations from the judges … this agency has placed all three judges on indefinite suspension … All three judges will be required to undergo additional training prior to their return to professional boxing judging."

The Williams-Lara judges were Hilton Whitaker II (115-114) and Don Givens (116-114), both of whom scored it for Williams, and Al Bennett who had it even at 114-114. Most other observers had Lara winning easily. HBO's unofficial scorekeeper, Harold Lederman, scored it 117-111 for Lara, as did I.

I commend Davis for taking this action; however, he is the head of the commission that chose the judges and pertinent questions must be asked:

According to BoxRec.com, Bennett previously judged two title fights, Whitaker seven, while it was the first high-profile fight judged by Givens. Why did the commission



PETER JACKSON: A BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUSTRALIAN HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION, 1860-1901
By Bob Petersen
McFarland & Company, Inc., soft cover
260 pages, $39.95

choose these particular judges? Were there any prefight objections by either camp due to the inexperience of the judges? Was the judges' lack of experience taken into consideration by the commission when they were selected?

I analyzed the official scorecards and came to the following conclusions:

Givens, the least experienced of the three, scored two rounds even, the third and the 12th. That is totally unacceptable. Judges are paid professionals and have to be trained to pull the trigger while scoring. In my opinion, none of these rounds were even. Whitaker also scored the last round even. Had he scored the last round for Lara, his tally would have been 114-114, and the fight would have been declared a majority draw—still not the correct verdict but certainly better than giving Lara a loss he didn't deserve. Finally, the judges agreed on only six rounds of the 12 rounds. This is not acceptable. The usual goal is for the judges to agree on at least nine of the 12 rounds.

Without knowing the mental and physical condition of the judges that night, I can only come to the following conclusion: They did not have the skill and experience to be assigned to a fight of this magnitude. But the postfight suspension notwithstanding, it was the New Jersey commission that assigned them, so who is really at fault here?

—Chuck Giampa

TOP 10 REASONS FIGHTS ARE BETTER LIVE THAN ON TELEVISION

1. You find out what it really sounds like when a guy gets punched in the mouth.
2. You get to see what round card girls do *during* the rounds. (Spoiler alert: they sit there smiling and looking hot.)
3. If you're close enough to the ring, you might get spattered with blood, snot, sweat, or the tiny shards of newly chipped teeth. If it's a Brandon Rios fight, you might get all four.
4. No Gus Johnson.
5. Remember how it was in high school when two kids would square off in the hall and everyone would stop what they were doing to watch? Yeah. It's like that.
6. Lots of goons go to the fights and they bring their dumb, slutty, hot girlfriends with them. So there's always something to look at between fights.
7. The smell of sweat, beer, onions, aftershave, steroids, and hot dogs mixed together. There's nothing like it.
8. There's always someone interesting to talk to at the fights. You're all in the same club.
9. If you don't like round card girls, don't look. At least it's you deciding and not some uptight cable network jackass deciding for you.
10. You get to see what the commentators do when they're not on camera. Hint: It's pretty much what everyone is else doing.

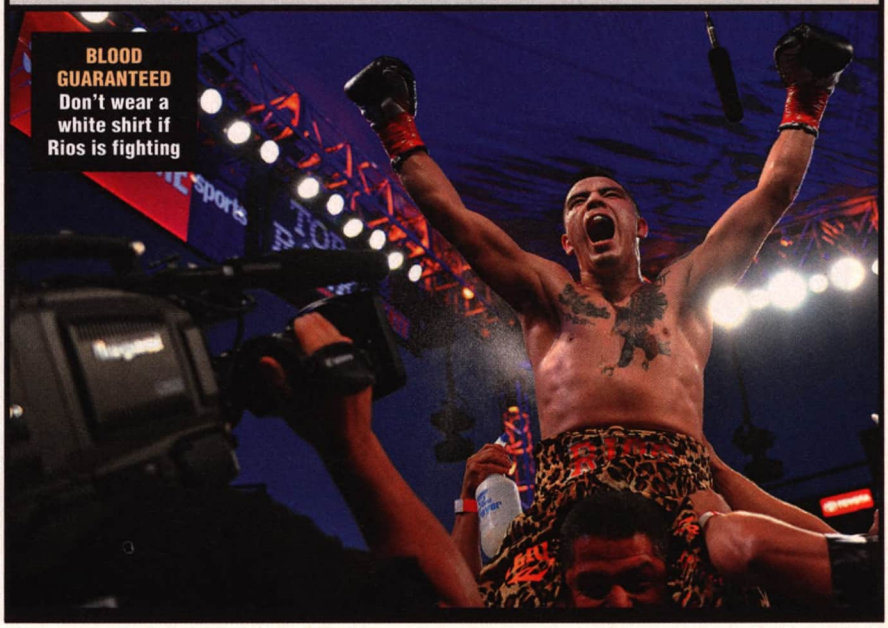


PHOTO BY BRYAN CROWE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

COLONEL BOB IS BACK

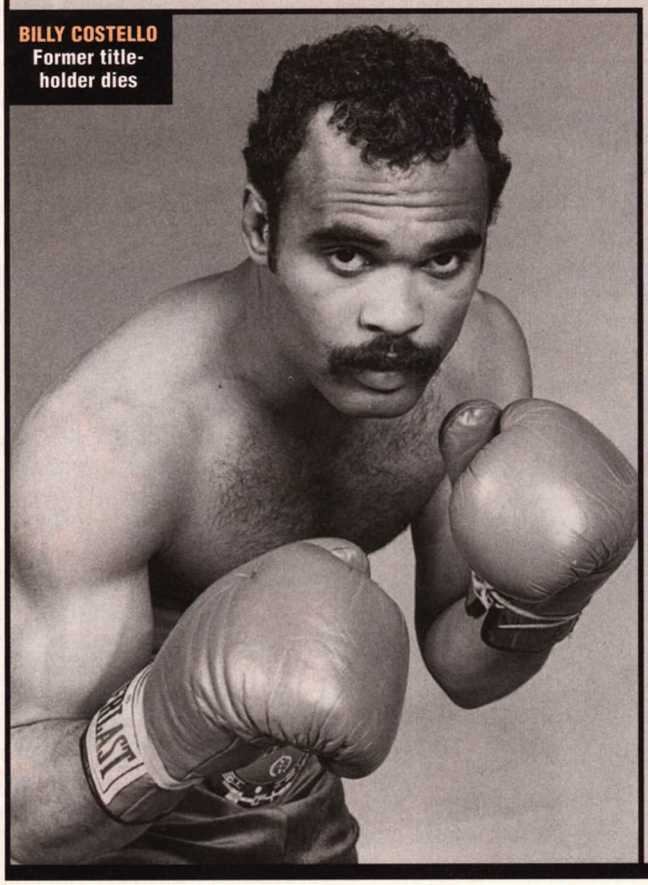
The fact that bombastic broadcaster Col. Bob Sheridan was back behind the microphone for the Brandon Rios-Urbano Antillon slugfest in Carson, California, on July 9, was akin to a miracle. Sheridan, who has been one of boxing's busiest broadcasters since the mid-1970s, had just spent six months in the hospital. Originally hospitalized with a heart attack, Sheridan was in a coma for 30 days with fluid on his lungs and pneumonia. He also underwent back surgery and spent many weeks in a rehab program.

A former rodeo bull rider, the extroverted Sheridan is one of boxing's most endearing characters, though not everybody enjoys the way he calls a fight.

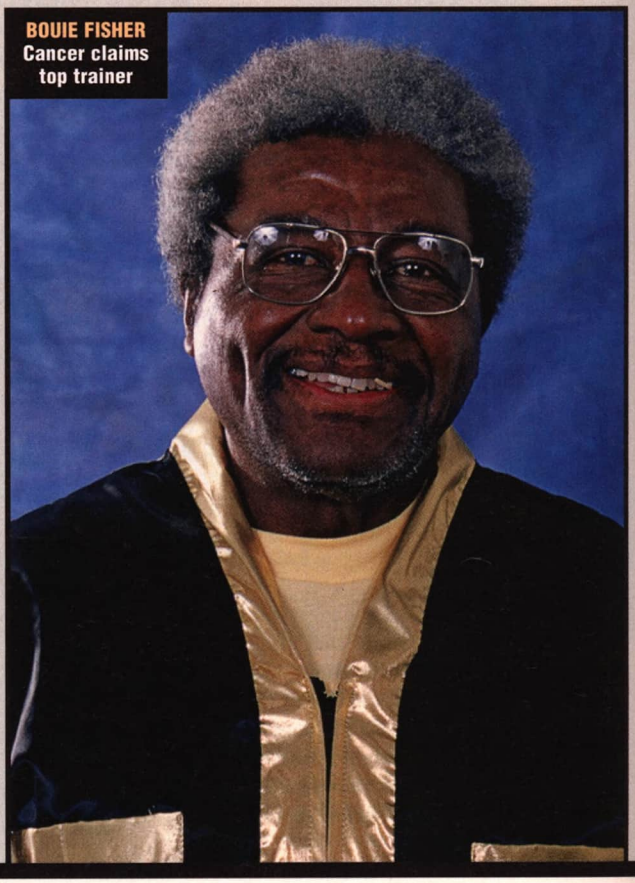
"I get criticized sometimes for hyping a fight that probably wasn't as good as how I called it," Sheridan told writer Steve Kligallon, "but I don't pretend to be a journalist. My idea is, if we get some bad fights, I have to do whatever we can do to keep the audiences. A lot of young broadcasters don't even think about that, they shoot the s___ and entertain themselves. But I say, 'Hey, this is for the people out there,' and I don't forget it."

OBITUARIES

Former WBC junior welterweight titleholder **Billy Costello**, 55, died of lung cancer on June 29. Costello, born William Castiglioni, was a basketball star at Kingston (New York) High School and won the New York Golden Gloves lightweight championship in '78. He turned pro in August 1979 and captured the WBC 140-pound belt on January 29, 1984, with a 10th-round TKO of **Bruce Curry**. Costello successfully defended the title three times before losing it to **Lonnie Smith** via eighth-round TKO on August 21, 1985. He retired the following year after suffering a knockout loss to **Alexis Arguello**. Costello returned to the ring in June '92 and won nine straight before hanging up his gloves for good in June '99 with an excellent overall pro record of 40-2 (23). After boxing, he worked as a home contractor and in road construction while also coaching at the PAL boxing club at Kingston's Midtown Neighborhood Center. Costello was also the subject of **Thomas Hauser**'s 1986 book, *The Black Lights: Inside The World Of Professional Boxing* ... Acclaimed Philadelphia trainer **English**

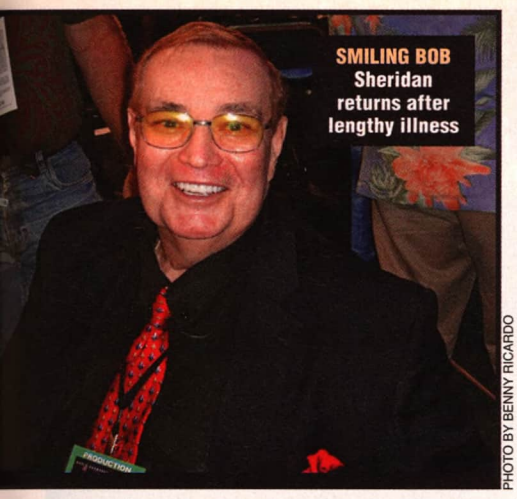


BILLY COSTELLO
Former title-holder dies



BOUIE FISHER
Cancer claims top trainer

Outside The Ropes



SMILING BOB Sheridan returns after lengthy illness

PHOTO BY BENNY RICARDO

"Bouie" Fisher, 83, died of rectal cancer on June 30. Fisher was best known for working with **Bernard Hopkins**, whom he guided to the world middleweight championship. Among the other prominent boxers Fisher trained were **Hasim Rahman**, **Ivan Robinson**, and **Jesse Ferguson**. "Philadelphia's deserved reputation as perhaps America's foremost boxing city is largely based on the quality of the veteran trainers who honed the skills of so many local fighters who went on to become champions," said **Bernard Fernandez**, *Philadelphia Daily News* boxing writer. "Bouie was one of the last of a diminishing breed, so he will be missed from that perspective. But he was also a gentleman who cared deeply about his family and fighters. If anything, he was a better human being than he was a trainer, and that is saying something." Fisher was the Boxing Writers Association of America's 2001 Trainer of the Year ... Veteran boxing writer **George Kimball**, 67, succumbed to cancer on July 7. He covered boxing for the *Boston Herald* for 25 years and authored a number of boxing books, including *Four Kings* in 2008... Former French lightweight titleholder **Andre Holyk**, 60, died of a heart attack on June 24. The best win on Holyk's 38-13-6 (16) record was a 12-round decision over future WBC lightweight titleholder **Jim Watt** in October 1975 ... **Volodymyr Rodionovych Klitschko**, 64, the father of **Vitali** and **Wladimir Klitschko** died of cancer on July 13. The elder Klitschko had been a colonel in the Soviet Air Force and was among those tasked with cleaning up the 1986 nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, which the Klitschko family believes was the cause of his cancer.

A new primetime **Manny Pacquiao** TV show called *Manny Many Prizes* debuted July 16 in the Philippines. Broadcast by the iGMA network, the program "brings hope and cheer to deserving Pinoys by giving them once-in-a-lifetime opportunities." The press release goes on to say "From the single mothers who juggle three jobs, the college student who works as a janitor by day, to the group of talented young athletes who lack funding—all will be rewarded for their hard work or unique and inspiring achievement. Big and exciting prizes are in store for the lucky recipients straight from Pac-Man himself" ... It's official: Former world junior welterweight champion and WBA welterweight titleholder **Ricky Hatton**, 32, finally announced his retirement. "After a lot of soul searching over the last couple of years, I have finally decided to confirm I will never box again, and there is no coming back," said Hatton at a July 7 media luncheon in London. "There have been so many times since the Manny Pacquiao fight when I have woken up and thought I would give it one more go, but it was not to be. As big a thanks as any must go to the fans that would never stop singing and so often turned Las Vegas into a corner of England. My fighting in the ring is over, and I look forward to seeing old friends and meeting new friends on my journey as a promoter." Hatton, THE RING's 2005 Fighter of the Year, earned an estimated $48-million during his 12-year pro career ... After taking acting lessons for nine months, former light heavyweight champion **Joe Calzaghe** has landed his first role. "I got the part in the horror film last week," Calzaghe told walesonline.com's **Julia McWatt** in early July. "Obviously, as a boxer, if you play a tough guy, people are going to link you to those parts. But I like to think I could vary it. " Calzaghe also squashed rumors of a boxing comeback. "I don't really miss the boxing. Sometimes I do a workout with my dad, and I want to keep in shape. It's been a big part of my life, but it has been nice not to think about having to lose 36 pounds before a fight" ... On July 8, former middleweight champion **Kelly Pavlik** was involved in a fight with his older brother, **Michael Pavlik**, at their parents' home in Youngstown, Ohio. According to a police report, after exchanging angry words with his brother, Kelly "punched the west-facing side door of the home and pulled his brother out of the window." Police officers found broken glass and blood on nearby steps and said Michael appeared to have minor cuts on his arms and hands. Michael, who did not wish to press charges, said that both he and Kelly had been drinking. Kelly, who earlier this year spent two months in an alcohol-abuse rehabilitation program, told 21 News reporter **Glenn Stevens** he was "absolutely not" drinking when the altercation took place ... **Ross Greenburg**, president of HBO Sports, has tendered his resignation under pressure, ending 33 years at the premium cable network. Greenburg has been heavily criticized in recent years for his handling of HBO's boxing programming, and his resignation was not unexpected ... Syrian heavyweight **Nasser al-Shami**, who won a bronze medal at the 2004 Olympic Games, was shot and wounded by the forces of President **Bashir-Assad** when they swept through several cities and towns in an attempt to crush the pro-democracy uprising. According to Associated Press, Al-Shami survived the shooting and is in stable condition.

HASTY EXIT Did Greenburg quit to avoid getting fired?

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

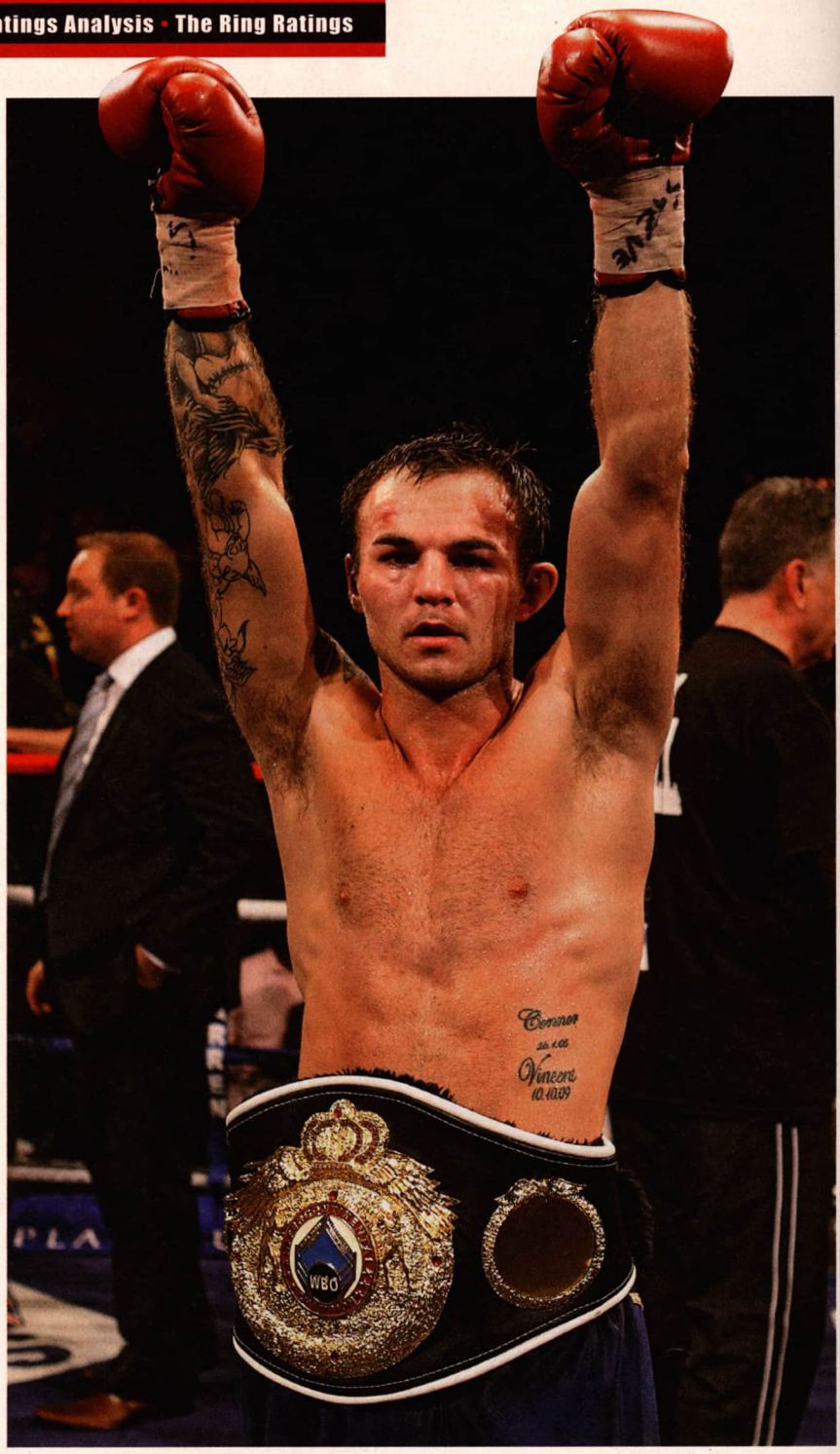


PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

Many fighters are never quite the same after suffering their first career loss, especially when it's a painfully one-sided kayo. That appears to be the scenario for English lightweight Kevin Mitchell. Though in this case, it's not such a bad thing.

Largely dismissed as a serious contender following a three-round loss to Michael Katsidis 14 months before, Mitchell revitalized his career with a thrilling stoppage of previously unbeaten countryman John Murray. Showing more skill and resiliency than in his truncated showdown with Katsidis, Mitchell took Murray's best shots in the early rounds and then began to break down his stronger opponent. He had Murray swollen and battered by the end of the seventh before dropping him in the eighth with a left hook. Game Murray beat the count, only to eat a left uppercut that prompted referee Richie Davies to stop it.

The win vaults Mitchell back into the number five spot in THE RING ratings. Next up could be a crack at beltholder Brandon Rios, who would likely be a heavy favorite. Mitchell would have to show he could avoid getting suckered into a brawl, as was the case against Katsidis. But as he proved against Murray, "Mighty" Mitchell might have learned a few things from that first loss.

KEVIN MITCHELL

RATINGS ANALYSIS

For Period Ended July 24, 2011

Heavyweights: David Haye falls from two to four following his poor showing against world champion Wladimir Klitschko. Haye's demotion enables Tomasz Adamek (third last issue) and Alexander Povetkin (fourth last issue) to move up one place each.

Cruiserweights: Antonio Tarver debuts at six after beating Danny Green (sixth last issue), who falls to 10, pushing out Yoan Pablo Hernandez (10th last issue).

Light Heavyweights: No changes.

Super Middleweights: No changes.

Middleweights: Paul Williams (third last issue) plummets to eight following his controversial decision victory over Erislandy Lara at junior middleweight. Williams' demotion moves up everyone rated four through eight one rung each.

Junior Middleweights: Kermit Cintron (second last issue) exits after his loss to Carlos Molina, who debuts at six. With Cintron out, that allows everyone rated three to five to advance one slot each. Erislandy Lara enters at five, based on the robbery defeat he suffered against Williams. Lara and Molina's inclusion pushes down Cornelius Bundrage (six last issue) to seven. Pawel Wolak (seventh last issue) sinks to nine due to his Fight of the Year candidate draw to Delvin Rodriguez, while Sechew Powell (ninth last issue) exits.

Welterweights: No changes.

Junior Welterweights: Amir Khan (second last issue) switches places atop the division with Timothy Bradley (first last issue), following his knockout victory of Zab Judah (sixth last issue), who falls to nine. The reshuffling sends everyone rated seven through nine up one place each.

Lightweights: Kevin Mitchell returns to the ratings at five following his upset victory over previously undefeated John Murray (fourth last issue), who drops to 10. The realignment pushes up Michael Katsidis (fifth last issue) to four. Urbano Antillon (eighth last issue) departs after the thrashing he took from number-one rated Brandon Rios. With Antillon leaving, Miguel Vazquez (ninth last issue) and Antonio DeMarco (10th last issue) move up one place each.

Junior Lightweights: No changes.

Featherweights: Elio Rojas (seventh last issue) exits due to inactivity. His departure raises Jhonny Gonzalez (ninth last issue) and Mikey Garcia (10th last issue) one spot each and enables Jorge Lacierva to enter at 10.

Junior Featherweights: Rico Ramos debuts at two following his devastating knockout victory over Akifumi Shimoda (second last issue), who falls to three. Everyone rated three through six trips down a notch and Ricardo Cordoba (seventh last issue) exits.

Bantamweights: No changes.

Junior Bantamweights: No changes.

Flyweights: Hernan Marquez (third last issue) leaps to one, thanks in part to his solid kayo victory over Edrin Dapudong, Daisuke Naito (first last issue) departing for inactivity, and Takefumi Sakata (second last issue) falling to four, since he has not fought since September 2010 when he lost to Daiki Kameda. The combination of Naito's departure and Sakata's demotion allows Luis Concepcion (fourth last issue) and Denkaosan Kaovichit (fifth last issue) to leap two places each. Moruti Mthalane (sixth last issue) benefits from the realignment, moving to five. Brian Viloria wedges his way in at six after beating Juan Carlos Miranda (seventh last issue), who falls to 10. Miranda's demotion bumps up everyone rated eight through 10 one place each.

Junior Flyweights: Brian Viloria (fifth last issue) exits to fight at flyweight. His departure enables everyone rated six and below to move up one place each and allows Ryo Miyazaki to debut at 10.

Strawweights: No changes.

Pound-for-Pound: No changes.

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com. *Records provided by boxrec.com.*

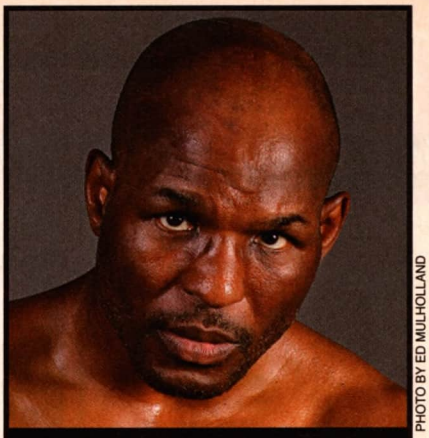


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO** *Welterweight*
2. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** *Middleweight*
3. **NONITO DONAIRE** *Bantamweight*
4. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** *Lightweight*
5. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** *Heavyweight*
6. **TIM BRADLEY** *Junior Welterweight*
7. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** *Flyweight*
8. **GIOVANI SEGURA** *Junior Flyweight*
9. **ANDRE WARD** *Super Middleweight*
10. **BERNARD HOPKINS** *Light Heavyweight*

The RING RATINGS

For Period Ended July 24, 2011

FLYING UP TO FLYWEIGHT
Brian Viloria moves from junior flyweight to flyweight with a splash, debuting at six after decisioning Julio Cesar Miranda.

PHOTO BY GREG HONDA/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to ringtv.com

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 56-3 (49)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 42-2 (39)
2. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 44-1 (28)
3. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 21-0 (15)
4. **DAVID HAYE**
England 25-2 (23)
5. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 26-1-1 (17)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 36-2 (18)
7. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 31-1 (21)
8. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
9. **ROBERT HELENIUS**
Germany15-0 (10)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 33-2 (28)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 24-2 (12)
2. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 33-1 (24)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 45-2-1 (32)
4. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia 22-1 (17)
5. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 24-2 (16)
6. **ANOTNIO TARVER**
Tampa, FL 29-6 (20)
7. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 29-3-1 (12)
8. **OLA AFOLABI**
England 17-2-3 (8)
9. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 37-3-2 (29)
10. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 31-4 (27)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 52-5-2 (32)

1. **JEAN PASCAL**
Haiti 26-2-1 (16)
2. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
Tallahassee, FL 23-0 (19)
3. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 30-1 (17)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
5. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
Wales 22-0 (11)
6. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 27-3 (15)
7. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 33-0 (18)
8. **KARO MURAT**
Iraq 23-1 (14)
9. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan 11-1 (7)
10. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO**
Spain 20-3 (7)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ANDRE WARD**
Oakland, CA 24-0 (13)
2. **CARL FROCH**
England 28-1 (21)
3. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 29-0 (24)
4. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 44-2 (33)
5. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Germany 40-2 (23)
6. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 28-5-2 (19)
7. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-15-2 (35)
8. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 32-3 (26)
9. **DIMITRI SARTISON**
Germany 27-1 (17)
10. **THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**
South Africa 15-0-1 (11)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: SERGIO MARTINEZ
Argentina 47-2-2 (26)

1. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 36-2-1 (15)
2. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia 25-1 (15)
3. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
England 28-3 (19)
4. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 34-4-1 (16)
5. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.**
Mexico 43-0-1 (30)
6. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany 30-1 (10)
7. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia 18-0 (14)
8. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 40-2 (27)
9. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France 26-0 (17)
10. **MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO**
Mexico 51-5-1 (44)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 36-2 (29)
2. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
   Mexico 19-1 (16)
3. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
   Mexico 37-0-1 (27)
4. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
   Armenia 30-0 (19)
5. **ERISLANDY LARA**
   Cuba 15-1-1 (10)
6. **CARLOS MOLINA**
   Mexico 19-4-2 (6)
7. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
   Detroit, MI 31-4 (18)
8. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
   Ukraine 37-1 (23)
9. **PAWEL WOLAK**
   Poland 29-1-1 (19)
10. **AUSTIN TROUT**
    Las Cruces, NM 23-0 (13)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines 53-3-2 (38)
2. **VICTOR ORTIZ**
   Garden City, KN 29-2-2 (22)
3. **ANDRE BERTO**
   Winter Haven, FL 27-1 (21)
4. **JAN ZAVECK**
   Slovenia 31-1 (18)
5. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
   Ukraine 31-0 (20)
6. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ**
   Poland 37-9-1 (19)
7. **MIKE JONES**
   Philadelphia, PA 25-0 (19)
8. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 46-7-1 (39)
9. **KELL BROOK**
   England 24-0 (16)
10. **SELCUK AYDIN**
    Turkey 22-0 (17)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **AMIR KHAN**
   England 26-1 (18)
2. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   Palm Springs, CA 27-0 (11)
3. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
   Argentina 30-2 (27)
4. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
   St. Louis, MO 22-1 (13)
5. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
   Ukraine 31-4-1 (13)
6. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
   Argentina 28-2 (26)
7. **LAMONT PETERSON**
   Washington, D.C. 28-1-1 (14)
8. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 51-7 (35)
9. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 41-7 (28)
10. **DANNY GARCIA**
    Philadelphia, PA 21-0 (14)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 53-5-1 (39)

1. **BRANDON RIOS**
   Lubbock, TX 28-0-1 (21)
2. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
   Mexico 56-7-2 (32)
3. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
   Gilroy, CA 29-1-1 (18)
4. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
   Australia 27-4 (22)
5. **KEVIN MITCHELL**
   England 32-1 (24)
6. **MIGUEL ACOSTA**
   Venezuela 28-4-2 (22)
7. **PAULUS MOSES**
   Namibia 27-1 (19)
8. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
   Mexico 29-3 (13)
9. **ANTONIO DEMARCO**
   Mexico 25-2-1 (18)
10. **JOHN MURRAY**
    England 31-1 (18)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MZONKE FANA**
   South Africa 30-4 (12)
2. **RICKY BURNS**
   Scotland 32-2 (9)
3. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
   Japan 17-0 (14)
4. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
   Puerto Rico 24-1-1 (15)
5. **JORGE SOLIS**
   Mexico 40-2-2 (29)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
   Mexico 22-1-1 (16)
7. **TAKAHIRO AO**
   Japan 21-2-1 (10)
8. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
   Dominican Republic 18-1 (9)
9. **ADRIEN BRONER**
   Cincinnati, OH 21-0 (17)
10. **DIEGO MAGDALENO**
    Las Vegas, NV 20-0 (7)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
   Cuba 20-0 (16)
2. **CHRIS JOHN**
   Indonesia 45-0-2 (22)
3. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 36-11-2 (24)
4. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
   Puerto Rico 30-1 (27)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
   Mexico 41-3 (34)
6. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
   Mexico 39-12-2 (23)
7. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 40-6 (36)
8. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 49-7 (43)
9. **MIKEY GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA 26-0 (22)
10. **JORGE LACIERVA**
    Mexico 39-7-6 (26)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
   Japan 38-4-3 (24)
2. **RICO RAMOS**
   Pico Rivera, CA 20-0 (11)
3. **AKIFUMI SHIMODA**
   Japan 23-3-1 (10)
4. **RYOL LI LEE**
   Japan 17-2-1 (8)
5. **POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**
   Thailand 44-2 (30)
6. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
   South Africa 32-6 (18)
7. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
   Cuba 8-0 (6)
8. **STEVE MOLITOR**
   Canada 33-2 (12)
9. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 57-6-2 (44)
10. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
    Puerto Rico 20-1-1 (17)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines 26-1 (18)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama 31-1-1 (11)
3. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana 28-2 (22)
4. **ABNER MARES**
   Mexico 21-0-1 (13)
5. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia 36-3-1 (27)
6. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 44-2 (22)
7. **YONNHY PEREZ**
   Colombia 20-2-1 (14)
8. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 25-1 (16)
9. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 28-2-3 (17)
10. **CHRISTIAN ESQUIVEL**
    Mexico 23-2 (17)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico 35-6-2 (25)
2. **TOMAS ROJAS**
   Mexico 36-12-1 (24)
3. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 35-0-2 (19)
4. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan 14-3-1 (9)
5. **YOTA SATO**
   Japan 21-2-1 (11)
6. **TEPPARITH SINGWANCHA**
   Thailand 16-2 (10)
7. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
   Mexico 41-6-2 (18)
8. **JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS**
   Mexico 32-6 (26)
9. **CESAR SEDA**
   Puerto Rico 20-1 (15)
10. **DRIAN FRANCISCO**
    Philippines 20-1-1 (16)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
Thailand 81-3-1 (44)

1. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 31-2 (24)
2. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama 22-2 (17)
3. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
   Thailand 53-3-1 (22)
4. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
   Japan 36-6-2 (17)
5. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   South Africa 27-2 (18)
6. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   Waipahu, HI 29-3 (16)
7. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines 28-6-2 (18)
8. **MILAN MELINDO**
   Philippines 24-0 (8)
9. **EDGAR SOSA**
   Mexico 43-6 (26)
10. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
    Mexico 35-6-1 (28)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: GIOVANI SEGURA
Mexico 28-1-1 (24)

1. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
   Mexico 21-1 (13)
2. **GILBERTO KEB BAAS**
   Mexico 35-21-4 (22)
3. **OMAR NINO**
   Mexico 30-4-2 (12)
4. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 34-2-1 (6)
5. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 33-2-3 (21)
6. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   Nicaragua 29-0 (24)
7. **LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE**
   Argentina 48-10-2 (18)
8. **RAMON HIRALES**
   Mexico 16-2-1 (9)
9. **MASAYUKI KURODA**
   Japan 19-3 (13)
10. **RYO MIYAZAKI**
    Japan 14-0-3 (8)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   South Africa 21-0 (15)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   Japan 7-0 (5)
3. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   Thailand 35-1-1 (13)
4. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico 30-1-1 (18)
5. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines 28-1-3 (15)
6. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua 28-3 (21)
7. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
   Thailand 17-0 (4)
8. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines 26-4-6 (16)
9. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan 24-4 (10)
10. **FLORANTE CONDES**
    Philippines 25-6-1 (21)

by Jeff Ryan

Paragraphs And Polygraphs

Ask journalists about the work they've done in their careers, and they'll eventually steer the conversation to the work that they regrettably *didn't* do. No matter how proud they are of some of the stories they've told, secrets they've uncovered, or answers they elicited through skillful questioning, in their minds, there are still too many juicy stories, colorful interview subjects, or valuable chances to opine that got away from them.

It may have been deadline issues, financial constraints, fleeting windows of opportunity, or other factors that denied them their dream assignments. In my case, it was simply having been born too late. My arrival on the boxing beat didn't come about until the early 1980s, by which time Rocky Marciano and Sonny Liston were dead, Muhammad Ali's speech was in decline, Sugar Ray Robinson was retired, and Howard Cosell had quit covering the pro game and was bitterly avoiding all of we evil print journalists.

Sometimes I think about what I would have asked some of those guys if I'd been working this job when they were still capable of sitting down and answering questions. Other times, I think about all of the subjects that I *did* interview and how I'd like another crack at a couple of them—this time with some sort of guarantee that all of their answers are truthful. (If sodium pentothal or a polygraph was required, so be it.)

Here are my questions. Where are their answers?

For Muhammad Ali: Do you dislike white people? In what round did Ken Norton break your jaw? Who do you wish you'd had the opportunity to fight? Who hit hardest, Liston, Frazier, Foreman, Shavers, or someone else? Why were you so cruel to so many opponents? Are there any decisions you got that you knew you didn't deserve? What is your biggest regret? Were your current health problems caused by boxing?

For Sonny Liston: What's the true story of the "phantom punch" in Lewiston, Maine? Did you purposely try to blind Cassius Clay in your first battle? Why, exactly, did you feel the need to surrender on your stool?

For Marvelous Marvin Hagler: Do you really believe that you beat Sugar Ray Leonard? Why did you foolishly fight in the orthodox stance against him in the early rounds? During contract negotiations, why didn't you insist on a smaller ring and lighter gloves? How could you let Leonard steal so many rounds in the final 30 seconds? Why didn't you ever fight again after that bout?

For Barry McGuigan: Do you think you're worthy of being a Hall of Famer?

For Sugar Ray Leonard: How could you have risked your eyesight with a comeback? Do the ugly losses to Terry Norris and Hector Camacho haunt you in any way? What did you see in the invincible Hagler that convinced you he was beatable? What did you say to Roberto Duran in the ring during your rematch? How close did you come to not turning pro?

For Roberto Duran: Why did you quit against Leonard? Is it true that you've actually understood English perfectly all these years? Why did you hit Ken Buchanan low? What was it about Esteban DeJesus that gave you so much trouble? Did you really knock out a horse?

For Howard Cosell: Did you ever regret turning your back on the pro game? Why do you hate the print media so much?

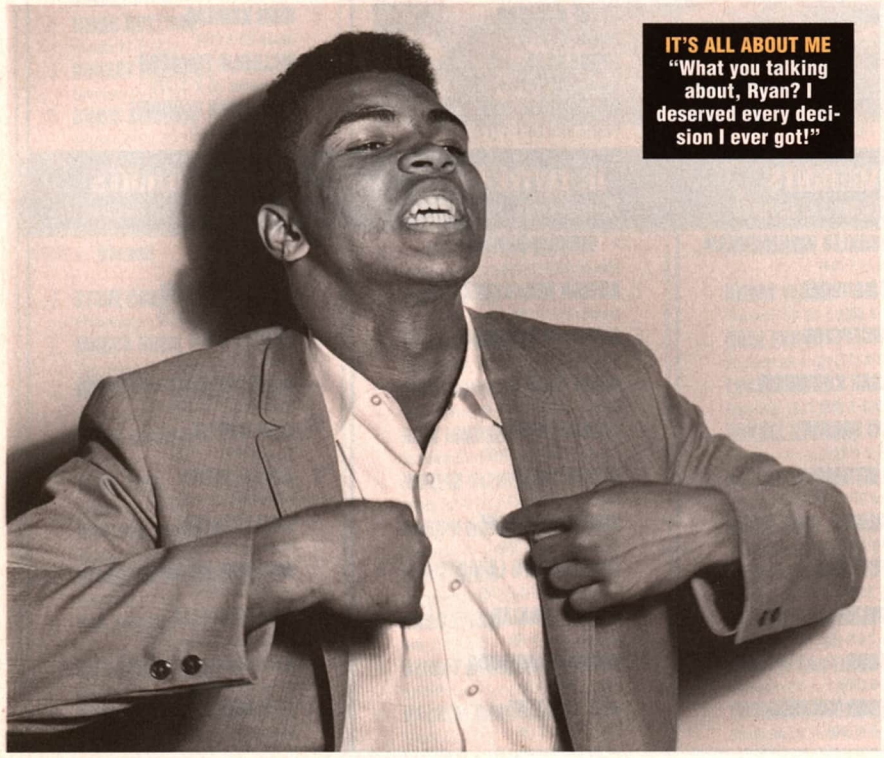
For Manny Pacquiao: Have you ever used performance-enhancing drugs? Why didn't you simply agree to drug testing the first time it was proposed by the Mayweather camp? Did Juan Manuel Marquez deserve the decision in either of your first two showdowns?

For Floyd Mayweather: Has it been your strategy all along to avoid Pacquiao until he gets older and accumulates more wear and tear?

For Joe Frazier: Stop sending mixed messages and tell us, once and for all, have you forgiven Ali or not?

For Rocky Marciano: Would you have still scored a knockout, or even won, if Joe Louis was in his prime? What's the *true* reason you retired? Was it because your back was bad, your wife was nagging you, or because you got tired of giving your manager, Al Weill, 50 percent of everything you earned? Why didn't you trust anyone paying you by check? Where is your money hidden? Do you regret not making a comeback?

For Mike Tyson: While growing up as a troublemaker on the streets, what's the worst thing you ever did to another person? What's the biggest mistake you made with your career? What did Buster Douglas do right that no other opponent could do? Can you describe



IT'S ALL ABOUT ME
"What you talking about, Ryan? I deserved every decision I ever got!"

exactly how events unfolded the night you and Desiree Washington were alone in that Indiana hotel room? Have you ever looked in the mirror and regretted getting that facial tattoo? Where do you rank among the all-time heavyweight champions? Why did you bite Evander Holyfield's ear? Was it because you knew you were going to lose and wanted to get disqualified?

For Michael Spinks: Did you have any kind of game plan for beating Tyson? And (a question I actually did pose to Spinks once) why don't you just give your brother, Leon, a few million dollars to help solve his personal and financial problems?

For Larry Holmes: Could you have knocked out Ali any time you wanted? Did you damage your legacy by competing until you were 52?

For George Foreman: How could you have been so dumb as to get lured into the Rope-A-Dope?" Do *you* cook on a George Foreman Grill at home? Are you still convinced that you saw Jesus Christ in the dressing room in Puerto Rico? How can a reverend justify punching people and trying to hurt them?

For Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini: How often do you think of Duk Koo Kim?

For Thomas Hearns: Why couldn't you ever win the big one?

For Matthew Saad Muhammad: Do you forgive your family for abandoning you on a highway?

For Jake LaMotta: Since you admitted you took a dive against Billy Fox, do you think you belong in Canastota?

For Bernard Hopkins: How do you justify fighting well beyond the age at which you promised your mother that you'd retire? Do you regret throwing the Puerto Rican flag to the ground? How the hell did you ever lose to Jermain Taylor?

For Sugar Ray Robinson: Who's the best fighter *you* ever saw?

When it comes to a lot of these guys, my Q & A will now have to wait until we cross paths one day at the Cloud Nine Fight Club. It's there that I'll be asking Cus D'Amato and Jim Jacobs how Tyson's career and life would have unfolded had they been around longer to guide him and where Liston, Arturo Gatti, and Alexis Arguello can explain to me how they *really* died.

I'VE GOTTA GET AWAY FROM THESE GUYS
Did Marciano retire to escape the clutches of Al Weill (on the left, with his hand on Rocky's forearm)?

B-HOPPING MAD
"Ask me any damn thing you want, Ryan!"

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS

The last word on everything from "Dr. Steel Hammer" to Dr. R.Jones, HBO's resident neurologist:

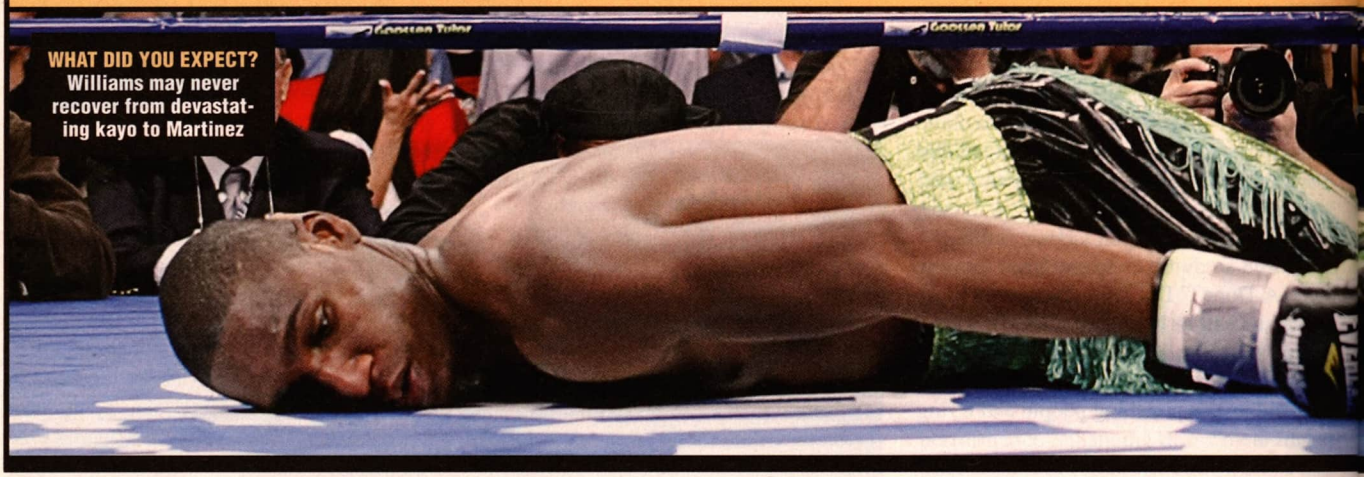
• Klitschko's achievements must be respected, but the reason he's never been a big favorite of mine has to do with the weak jaw that Haye's haymakers were supposed to exploit. The heavyweight king has been stopped three times, and not even china-chinned Floyd Patterson held that distinction at the time he ruled the big men. The other thing that has always bothered me about Wladimir is that it's difficult to think of a guy as the baddest man on the planet when you're convinced that his brother would kick his ass if they rearranged the furniture and squared off tomorrow in the family dining room.

• So Wladimir's win gave him the WBA belt to add to his IBF, WBO, and IBO crowns, eh? Geez, that's more junk hardware than you'll find at a Taiwanese garage sale.

• Klitschko-Haye came on at 4:45 E.S.T. on a Saturday afternoon which was a nice throwback to the days of the matinee boxing telecasts of my youth, teen years, and young adulthood. It was great to once again plan a weekend day around a boxing telecast and have to rush back home in time for the start. All that was missing was having to sit through an hour of wrist wrestling, dog sledding, or the World Lumberjack Championships before the opening bell.

• Ricky Hatton, who hasn't fought in two years, announced his retirement in July. The Briton's official farewell raises the obvious question: Is he a future Hall of Famer? In my opinion, he's not. Hatton was annihilated by his two toughest foes, Mayweather and Pacquiao, and he beat only one superstar, Kostya Tszyu.

• Rest in peace, Nick Charles. And thanks for bringing class to your work, always being prepared, never screaming hysterically, and acting like neither a jock-sniffer nor someone who felt he was superior to the blue-collar sport he was covering.



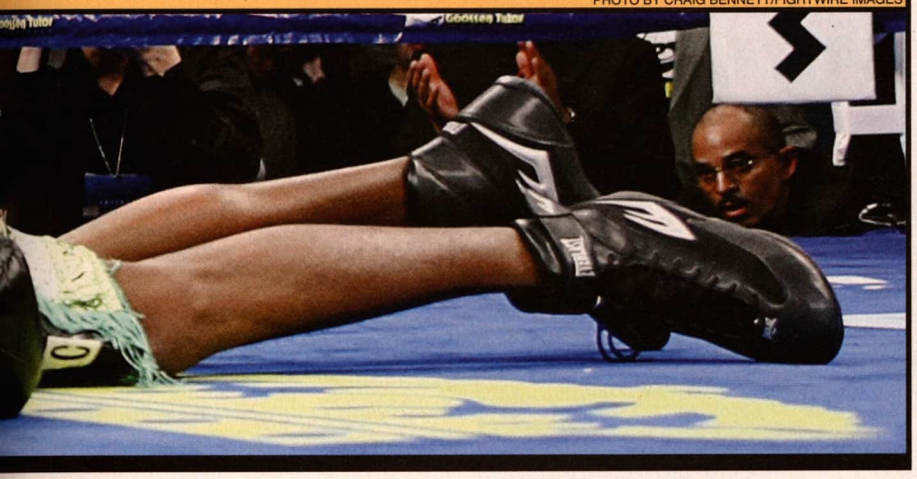
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? Williams may never recover from devastating kayo to Martinez

LAME GAME Maybe Haye should have wrapped his foil blanket around his pinkie toe

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

- Pacquiao won the ESPY for Best Fighter at ESPN's annual, self-serving pseudo awards show. Wow, that must be front and center in "Pac Man's" trophy case, no?
- Lucian Bute vs. Kelly Pavlik and the "Super Six" finale of Andre Ward vs. Carl Froch are just a couple of annoying chores that must be taken care of before Bute and Ward square off in one of my most anticipated bouts of 2012.
- Paul Williams' decline isn't surprising at all. How many fighters who suffer the kind of devastating stoppage "The Punisher" did against Sergio Martinez are ever the same again?
- Incredibly, there was HBO analyst Roy Jones, he of the three straight defeats (two by brutal knockout) in a career that continues at age 42, saying of the punches Williams was absorbing from Erislandy Lara, "Those shots take a lot off a guy's life, and people don't understand that don't really box that this is the type of punishment that causes bad problems once he's done with the game." Jones sounds like a 400-pound, wheezing, water-retaining future heart-attack victim shaking his head in disapproval at the guy he sees eating a glazed donut.

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES



The Toe Must Go On

Actually, Wladimir Klitschko and David Haye *did* deliver on their promise of bombs bursting in air when they finally met in July. It's just too bad that not many bombs burst in each other's faces during the course of 12 mostly forgettable rounds. No, the CompuBox crew wasn't exactly drenched in sweat on this night because the two heavyweights fought as though they believed landing a combination would be grounds for disqualification.

Klitschko clearly deserved the decision, but playing it cautious and prevailing mainly because God blessed him with the height and reach of the Colossus of Rhodes doesn't entitle him to take many bows for his performance. And his British challenger looks particularly foolish after promising to decapitate his foe and then mounting only minimal offense for fear of getting hit in return.

What was even more galling about Haye, though, was his blaming his lame showing on a broken toe he'd suffered in training. One is reminded of that old sports saying, "If you're hurt, don't play. And if you play, you're not hurt." If Haye was truly troubled by his little piggy, then he should have postponed the bout. He claimed that he couldn't push off his right leg, but he seemed to be pushing off just fine while repeatedly launching himself wildly toward Klitschko in an attempt to land one crunch-punch at a time.

Haye's problem was that he fought too cautiously. If he'd have only displayed the same fury as the bodyguards who were literally tossing aside any British fans hoping to backslap Haye on his walk to the ring, we'd have a new heavyweight champion today.

Debilitating toe, my foot. ■

Too Much Like Tua-Lewis

Well, so much for three years of insults and taunting from David Haye. What it all amounted to in the end was the blather of a con artist looking for a big payday and a ring to retreat in. His performance brought to mind a night 11 years ago in Las Vegas when I covered what most of us thought would be a promising heavyweight title match between Lennox Lewis and challenger David Tua. It also pitted a long-reigning, formidable champion who owned a big reach advantage over a dangerous, shorter challenger who needed to come inside to get anything done.

But in one way the earlier fight was very different from Haye's challenge to Wladimir Klitschko because, early on, Tua did try to come forward and attack. But after tasting Lennox's power, he elected to stay away and pray for the final bell. There was also a comic aspect to Tua's frazzled performance because he continued bobbing and weaving through 12 rounds even though most of his efforts went into making sure he was on the other side of the ring. This is like ducking your head in Schenectady in case somebody throws a punch in Poughkeepsie.

"Hayemaker" wanted no part of Klitschko from the opening bell. Although he occasionally darted in and out like a rabid squirrel, his primary mission was to stay outside Wladimir's punching range, which meant of course neither man could find the other. And Haye invented an entirely original strategy: When he found himself close enough to get hit, he sank to the canvas for safety. Truly original. If a rookie tried that in a four-rounder, some referees might disqualify him. But experienced referees know they might see something goofy when a kid steps into a pro ring for the first time. They're not as ready for it in a heavyweight championship fight, which explains why exasperated referee Genaro Rodriguez couldn't figure out what to do about Haye's frantic dives until round eleven, when he finally called one of them a knockdown.

Wladimir, who wanted this fight so badly he accepted a 50-50 split, didn't earn high marks either. On those occasions he might have tried to pin Haye on the ropes and make him fight, he elected to let him get away. The Ukrainian giant seeks an exact distance, not too far, not too close—like Goldilocks choosing her porridge.

As for Haye's reputedly broken little toe, it wasn't the problem. It wasn't even germane to the discussion. All the rest of David Haye was the real problem. And while we're on the subject of toes … we've seen fighters with more character in one toe than Haye could summon with his entire being. I truly sympathize with British fans who traveled all the way to Hamburg to see not much of anything. Eleven years ago, I journeyed to Las Vegas to see something terribly similar.

PRICEY MAYWEATHER-ORTIZ

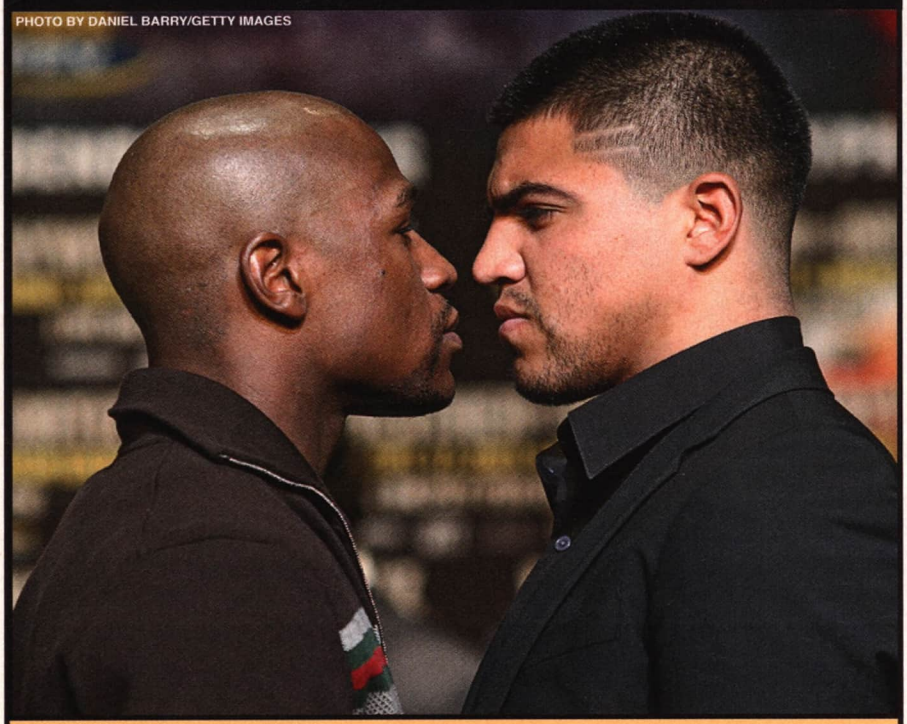


PHOTO BY DANIEL BARRY/GETTY IMAGES

FACE-OFF

The press conference was free, but it's gonna cost you plenty to see Mayweather-Ortiz live

The "cheap" seats for Floyd Mayweather-Victor Ortiz at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas were priced at $150, as expensive as I've ever seen bottom-rung tickets. The Golden Boy and MGM grandees are treating this event like they've got themselves a Super Bowl.

"This is not my last fight," said Floyd on the promotional tour. "Hopefully I can give you 10 more fights. I am closer to 40 than I am to 21, but I am not going anywhere." Interesting. I once sat only a few feet away as he announced his unequivocal retirement after "one more fight" and wept real tears as he said it. That was five years ago, less than an hour after he'd stunk out the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas hitting and running away all night against solid but slow Carlos Baldomir. His retirement pronouncement in 2006 was no more reliable then his anti-retirement declaration of this year. What is clear is that "Money" won't fight often, even if he beats those pesky felony charges. He's competed only four times since his Baldomir fight ended with a chorus of boos.

PHOTO BY JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

FALSE BRAVADO
Haye was doing well until he actually entered the ring

Safety First

Now that evidence is rolling in from everywhere that lots of ex-NFL players show signs of brain damage, fat-cat team owners, who've locked out their players in an effort to beat down their wages, decided to fix the problem by demanding two more regular-season games. And they say boxing guys are hard-hearted?

The Other Hall

The World Boxing Hall of Fame, the West Coast answer to the better-known International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York, hopes to be back in business with another banquet next year under new leadership. For years, the annual event attracted as many as 2,000 attendees in Los Angeles as it bestowed awards on fighters, trainers, and others from the fight world. Fans loved rubbing elbows with all those celebrities. But in 2010, the group tried to move the dinner to Las Vegas in the teeth of a sour economy, and it all fell through. The organization is still fighting a lawsuit from a promotional firm involved in the planning.

MAGOO TENT CROWDED AGAIN

When Tavoris Cloud stopped Yusef Mack in the eighth round, everyone knew Cloud, working behind a relentless barrage of heavy shots, was ahead—the corners, the fighters, the fans, everyone—except, that is, for Adelaide Byrd, the judge brought all the way from Nevada to etch her ridiculous score of 67-66 for Mack in St. Charles, Missouri. Did Byrd get a talking-to? You bet. They took her aside to instruct her to pack her blundering pencil for an all-expenses-paid trip the very next weekend to Hamburg, Germany. There, she worked the Klitschko-Haye championship match, a crown jewel assignment thirsted after by every boxing judge on Earth.

Slam-banging Lucas Matthysse was victimized by the hometown split decision for very likable Devon Alexander, who appears to have hit a career plateau. Not that it was a walkover. It was close but also clear. Denny Nelson's 95-94 for Alexander was goofy and Carlos Colon's score of 96-93 Alexander was a train wreck. Alexander went down once. That means Colon gave Argentine Matthysse only three rounds. Coming to America for a fatter purse and running into a decision like this is like slipping into town to sell your kidney.

Is there anything more to say about the three blind mice who awarded a loathsome majority decision to shockingly faded Paul Williams over Erislandy Lara in Atlantic City? Yes. The blame can't all rest on the incompetent shoulders of Donald Gibbons, Hilton Whitaker, and Al Bennett (Bennett scored it 114-114 in a fight in which it was impossible to give Lara fewer than eight rounds). So the commission suspended all three judges? Big deal. This thing was so gruesome they ought to suspend the entire state of New Jersey. Maybe let Hawaii run the place for a year. Once again, we get to see why Springsteen's always complaining about something.

Futches

To both Brandon Rios and the defeated Urbano Antillon, two guys who came to fight. That may have been the finest two-and-a half-round bout since Marvelous Marvin Hagler's incredibly exciting beatdown of Thomas Hearns in 1985. A third Futch to Carlos Molina, who shook off the prevailing assumption that he was just an opponent brought in to pad Kermit Cintron's record.

INCREDIBLE ACTION
Both winner Rios and loser Antillon win Futch Awards

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

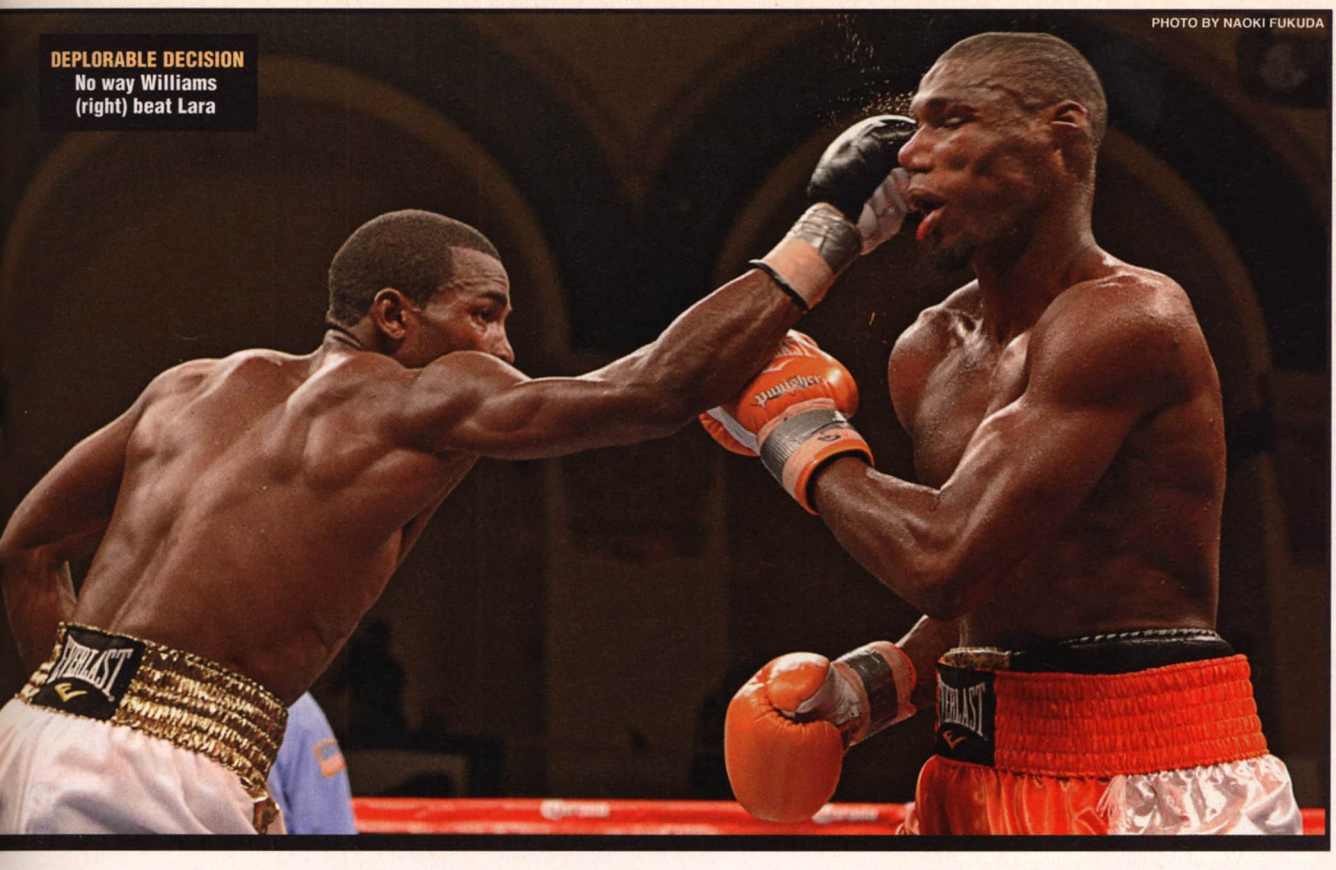


PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

DEPLORABLE DECISION
No way Williams (right) beat Lara

So Long, Kemosabe

The California commission, still operating under the blundering, secretive thumb of the Department of Consumer Affairs, may soon be kicked out of Indian casinos, whose boxing shows make up about 35 percent of the state's cards. The tribes are tentatively organizing a joint commission that would govern all their shows. Retired lawyer Ron Arnold, a long-time boxing insider who's worked for several promoters, is a key player.

Normally I'd want the nearly bankrupt state to keep this revenue, but the clueless "consumer" commissars now calling the shots for boxing seem to model their operations after the Transylvanian Department of Motor Vehicles only with more secrecy and less ability. The DCA once installed a boxing executive officer who freely admitted to me that he didn't know much about boxing and didn't think that was important. This was after the bloodless consumer affairs commissars made sure that neither Arnold nor referee Pat Russell would get the appointment because, apparently, they were too well-versed in the sport. I'm not kidding about this. They figure ethical people who know boxing are too troublesome. The application of respected referee Jack Reiss was also deep-sized. He'd bid for the key position of chief inspector.

Some tribal casinos elsewhere operate their own commissions—in Connecticut, for example. But I know of no states where the tribes have joined forces under one regulatory roof. If this comes to pass, California's Native Americans would be operating one of the biggest commissions in the US.

Over the years, I've watched DCA-bossed commissions let a fighter compete who was HIV-positive, fail to investigate two fixed fights, blacklist their best referees, let kids inherit commission jobs like they're private family heirlooms, and promote an inspector after he'd okayed one of Antonio Margarito's loaded wraps. It was Shane Mosley's sharp-eyed trainer Naazim Richardson who discovered the plaster inserts.

PHOTO BY LAURA DELATORRE

TOO COMPETENT FOR COMMISSION
California commission turned down ref Reiss' attempt to become chief inspector

More information dribbles out about the infamous plaster of Paris night in L.A. Not only did the commission fail to call the cops, the nincompoops in charge passed Margarito's confiscated plaster inserts around to all the officials, contaminating the evidence. "There we were, 18 guys," one of them told me, "picking the stuff up, turning it over . . ." Classic. ■

Ivan Goldman can be reached at ivangoldman@yahoo.com.

PHOTOS BY JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

TWO-HANDED VICTORY
Klitschko had no trouble winning a wide unanimous decision over Haye. The defending world champion piled up points with both hands in what turned out to be a monotonously one-sided bout

HOW GOOD IS WLADIMIR?

The Ring Searches Recent History For The Answer

By William Dettloff

It is not news that a favorite pastime of fight observers is comparing heroes from different eras toward finding the best of the best. This fun, but mostly useless enterprise, takes on a deeper urgency when the dominant man of the current era has from all sensible appearance run himself out of non-blood related challengers, the way world heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko did in July when he disposed of David Haye at the Imtech Arena in Hamburg, Germany.

Haye, for all the breezy weightlessness of his heavyweight resume, managed to convince many to confuse superficial arrogance with genuine self-belief, athletic instinct with athletic intelligence. He was thus seen as probably the last remaining threat to a Klitschko, though primarily to Wladimir, whose history of occasional and shocking fragility gives hope to even the crudest challengers, all of whom have thus far discovered to their collective horror that exploiting that fragility is easier said than done.

Like the many before him, Haye, 25-2 (23), quickly found that beating Klitschko, 35, requires several qualities he does not possess to any appreciable degree. He was further handicapped by a broken pinky toe, if you can stand it, which prevented him, he said afterward, from "pushing off." One is forced to wonder what a more resolute heavyweight, perhaps one from another era, would have endured to win the world heavyweight title, a time long ago seen as the most valuable prize in sport.

Which brings us to this: Klitschko's 14-fight win streak (10 of which have been recorded by knockout) and seemingly recent invincibility places him unquestionably at the top, along with his brother, among today's heavyweights. But how about the heavyweights from other eras? What heavyweights from the past possessed the qualities necessary to beat him?

A thorough exploration of that question requires a recollection first of the three fighters who have beaten Klitschko and the circumstances surrounding those wins: Ross Puritty, a sturdy, 6'3", 225-pound journeyman, backed up the 22-year-old Wladimir, took his bombs with little fuss, and stopped him in the 11th round in 1998. Corrie Sanders, a 6'4", 240-pound southpaw with incongruously quick and heavy hands, dropped Klitschko with an overhand left in the first round in their bout in 2003 and stopped

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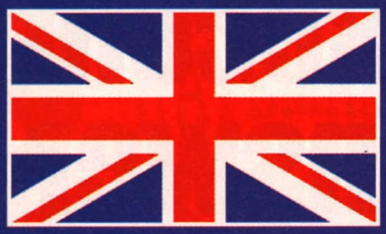

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A TRIO OF WINNERS
Former heavyweight champions (from left to right) Larry Holmes, Mike Tyson, and Sonny Liston were among those frequently mentioned by experts when asked to select heavyweights from the recent past who would have probably beaten Klitschko.

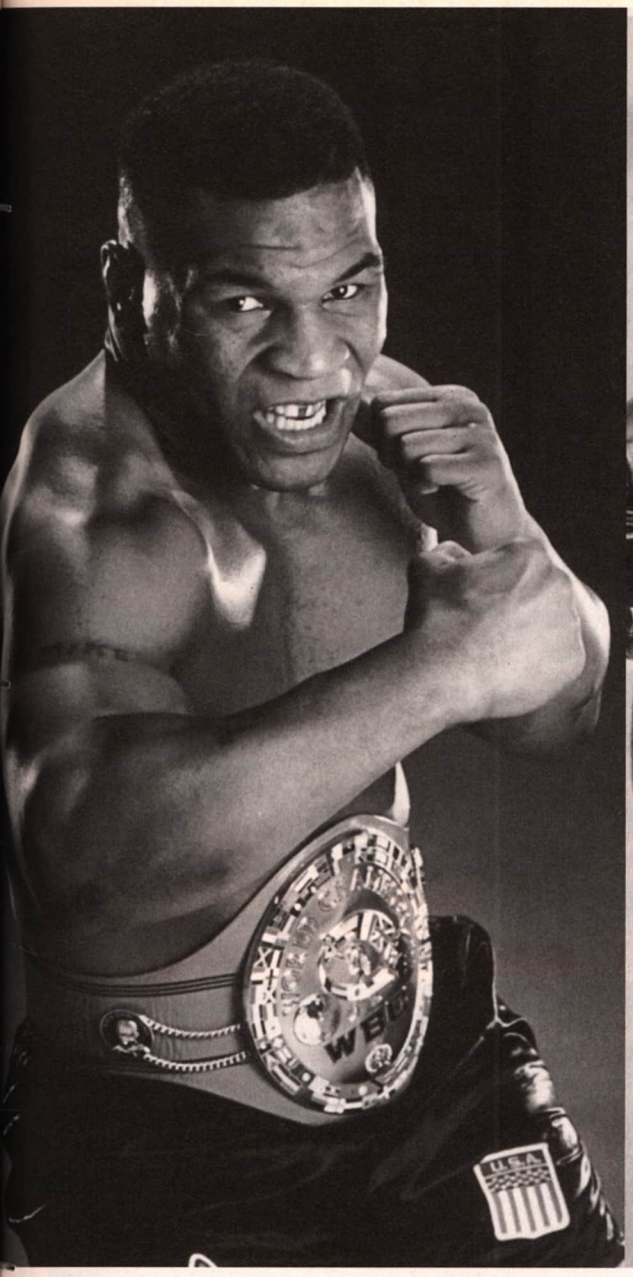
him a round later. Lamon Brewster, 6'2", 228 pounds, let Klitschko empty his considerable guns for four rounds in their match in 2004 before stopping him with a series of crackling power punches in the fifth.

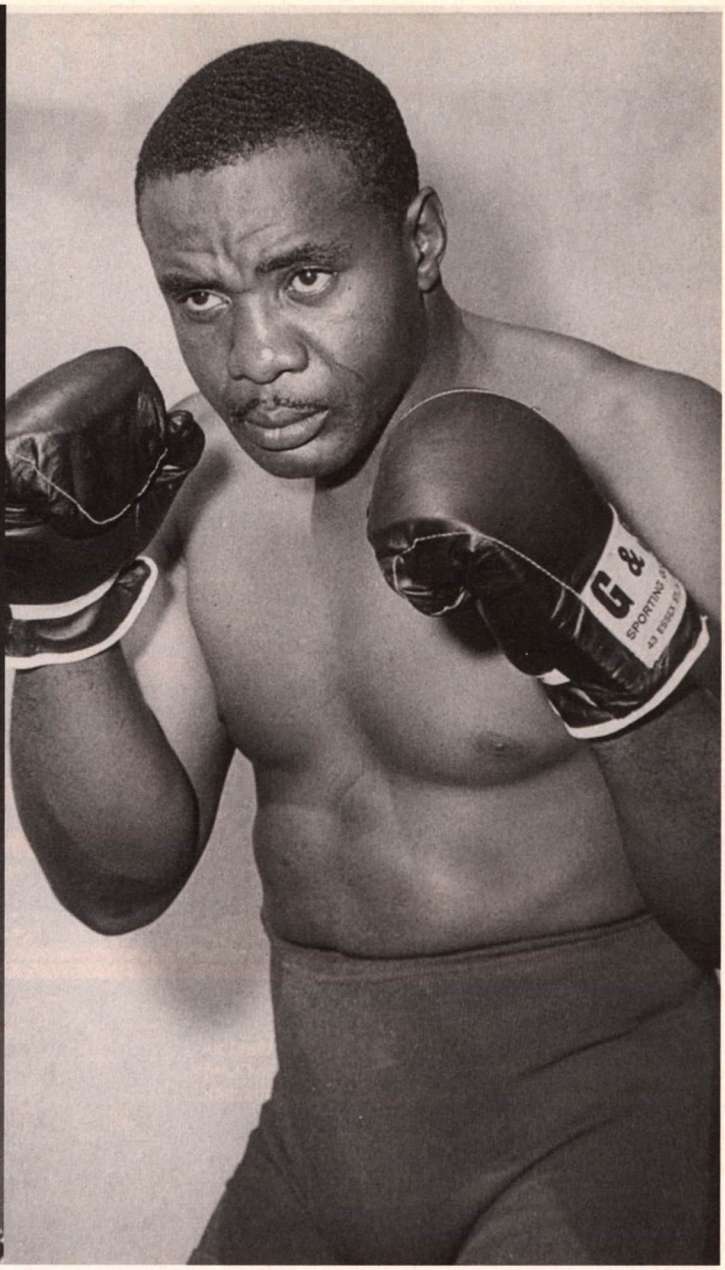
We would be remiss if we failed to note that each of these losses came before Klitschko and Emanuel Steward fully perfected the style we see Little Brother employ over and over and again today: the cautious, reserved approach that is based entirely on Klitschko's excellent jab, which softens up and demoralizes opponents to such a degree that by the time Klitschko finally opens up with power punches—*if* he opens up with power punches—the opponent is more or less happy to have it over with. (And so are we.)

Indeed, the Wladimir Klitschko of today is so far removed from the one who collapsed against Puritty—moving all over the ring, slinging wild punches, lunging off balance—it might as well be a different fighter altogether. Still, it stands to reason that those three fighters possessed qualities that would be valuable against any version of Klitschko, pre- or post-Steward.

And the common denominators would seem an iron chin, stamina, and resolve, or, in Sanders' case, who in the main lacked at least two of those requisites, considerable offensive firepower. Who fits the bill?

"There's a whole string of guys, but Larry Holmes is at the top," trainer Buddy McGirt, who trained Brewster for his disastrous rematch against Klitschko, told THE





RING. "Larry Holmes had that jab, man. He had one of the best jabs since Joe Louis. His jab was unbelievable. And Larry had heart. He just wasn't gonna fold. At a late age, he beat Ray Mercer and went 12 rounds with Evander Holyfield. Holmes would have knocked Klitschko out."

It can be argued that Holmes' greatest weapons outside his jab were his stubborn refusal to lose and his ability to fight through pain and near catastrophe. He fought brilliantly with a torn biceps muscle in his thrilling 15-round title-winning slugfest with Ken Norton in 1978 and with a broken thumb against "Big" Roy Williams in '76.

Holmes came off the canvas to win three times in title defenses: against Renaldo Snipes, Mike Weaver, and the bomb-throwing Earnie Shavers. It is impossible to envision a scenario in which he would fight solely to survive against Klitschko, as have the great majority of Klitschko's recent opponents, including Haye.

It is, however, easy to envision Holmes' movement, stinging right cross, and pure grit serving him well against the bigger, stronger Klitschko, as it did against the bigger, stronger guys he defeated: Gerry Cooney, Randy Cobb, Carl Williams, and James "Bonecrusher" Smith among them.

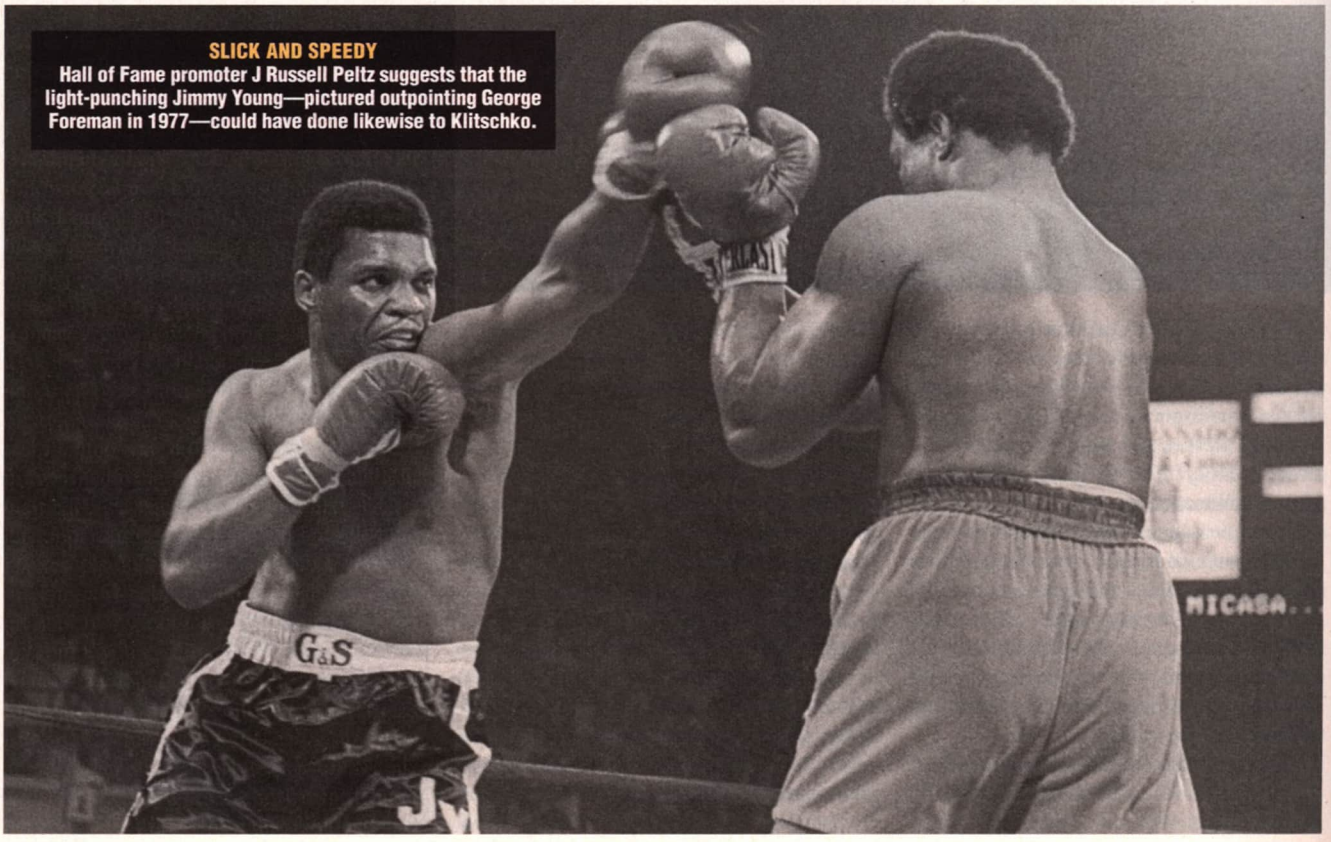
Against Haye, Klitschko, 56-4 (49) was bothered hardly at all by the little offense Haye mustered, with the exception of Haye's quick jab, which was all but abandoned in favor of movement followed by lunging overhand rights. Haye, 212.8 pounds, seemed at a loss as to how to get inside against Klitschko, 242.6, and, when he did get there, almost always by accident, he immediately jumped back outside, which was exactly the wrong thing to do.

"You gotta jump in his ass, you gotta jump on him," said McGirt. "You can't sit on the outside and play games with him; you gotta jump in his ass. That's what Mike Tyson would have done. Klitschko doesn't move enough to have beaten a young Tyson. Mike would have put that heat on his ass."

Much has been written about how overrated Tyson was in the beginning, but vintage Tyson, say, 1986-'89, was a force of nearly unparalleled barbarism in the ring whose ability to explode out of a crouch

ASSUMING THE POSITION
Frequently, when Haye got close enough to Klitschko to punch, he collapsed to his knees. Eventually, referee Genaro Rodriguez became tired of the ruse and gave Haye a mandatory eight count the final time he flopped down without being hit.

PHOTO BY JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



SLICK AND SPEEDY
Hall of Fame promoter J Russell Peltz suggests that the light-punching Jimmy Young—pictured outpointing George Foreman in 1977—could have done likewise to Klitschko.

PHOTO BY JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

STILL CHAMPION

Klitschko acknowledges the crowd of approximately 37,000 on hand at Imtech Arena to watch his trouble-free decision over Haye. There is little doubt that Waldimir will continue to be a huge attraction in Germany, but, without a compelling challenger, few fans outside Europe will be interested.

with speed and power made him unique among all heavyweights ever. Doubters will have trouble seeing how Tyson, at 5'10", would have reached the chin of the 6'6" Klitschko, but prime "Kid Dynamite" beat Tony Tucker, Jose Ribalta, and Mitch Green, all 6'5" or better, not to mention Carl Williams, Lou Savarese, and Bonecrusher Smith, all 6'4".

"I think Tyson would have stopped him within five rounds. The way he would have come at Wladimir and with his punching power would have been a real nightmare for Klitschko," said Rob Murray, trainer and manager of Eddie Chambers, whom Klitschko stopped in 12 rounds in March 2010.

"You have a guy who does not fight inside at all," Murray told THE RING. "He grabs and holds on the inside, and his eyes open up like golf balls when he gets hit. You got guys who would have come to him and fought him on the inside that would have hurt him enough on the inside and made him back up. Backing up is not what he does."

Murray cited 1990s heavyweight monster Ike Ibeabuchi as likely to beat Klitschko. At 6'4" and in the high 230s to 240s, he had the bulk to compete with Klitschko physically and the chin, fearlessness, and conditioning to run him ragged.

Fans will recall Ibeabuchi walking through the best left hooks David Tua had to offer and outhustling him on the way to a decision win, not to mention blowing out Chris Byrd. He was a fight or two away from getting a shot at Lennox Lewis when he was arrested and, at this writing, is still serving time.

"Anyone who can give you head movement, come in, and be a murderous puncher [would beat Klitschko]," Murray said. "If you can get to the target and hurt him, I think he'll forget everything that Emanuel told him. When you get a guy who can come and can punch, your whole thing is *I can't let him get close to me. If I let him get close he'll hurt me*. Wladimir does not fight well when hurt and doesn't take punches well."

Haye, London, England, never hurt Klitschko and, frankly, barely even hit him, which caused one to wonder how Klitschko came to have a red mark under his left eye by the late rounds. The tactic Haye resorted to more than any other was defensive rather than offensive: flopping to the canvas whenever Klitschko touched him on the back of the neck. His numerous visits to the canvas convinced referee Genaro Rodriguez to deduct a point from Klitschko, Kiev, Ukraine, in the eighth round.

Eventually and far later than one would have imagined, Rodriguez caught on to Haye's shenanigans and called one such flop, in the 11th round, a knockdown. That cured Haye of his curious lack of balance, but, by then, it was hardly worth the trouble. And after a 12th that was as unremarkable as all the rounds that preceded it, judges Michael Pernick, Adalaide Byrd, and Stanley Christodoulou turned in perfectly just scores of 118-108, 117-109, and 116-110, respectively. THE RING scored it 119-108.

It was hardly the stuff of, say, the Evander Holyfield-Riddick Bowe trilogy, two more guys who in their primes would have done well against Klitschko. Bowe, at 6'5", would very nearly match Klitschko physically and, at his best, was a superb and determined technician with a heavy punch. And he loved going against big guys. He obliterated 6'7" Jorge Luis Gonzalez.

Said McGirt: "Big guys like that Bowe ate up; he ate their lunchbox, man."

BELT BROTHERS
Yes, between them, Vitali and Wladimir have all the major belts, including The Ring world championship strap. But where would the highly successful duo rank among the all-time greats?

PHOTO BY SERGEI SUPINSKY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Murray maintains that not only would prime Holyfield beat Klitschko, today's 48-year-old version might even give him a run for his money. He said, "Holyfield would give Klitschko the dirtiest fight of his life. He'd butt him, hit him in the nuts, hit him every kind of place, and it would be a real, ugly vicious fight for him. Anyone who's a big puncher and comes forward would give him trouble."

Hall of Fame promoter and historian J Russell Peltz finds comparisons of fighters from different eras problematic but makes clear his opinion concerning Klitschko's place in history.

"He's not a top-10 heavyweight of all-time. What would he do with Sonny Liston pumping that jab at him, I mean the Sonny Liston from 1958-'62?" Peltz asked.

It's a good question. There's not a historian alive and worth quoting who doesn't consider that version of Liston a mountain of heartache for any heavyweight in history, and the qualities that made him so are the ones that would serve one well against Klitschko: iron chin, a murderer's temperament in the ring, sledgehammer hands, and above-average skills.

Peltz said too that the Tyson of 1988 would beat Klitschko and that Joe Frazier "would have a shot. He might have trouble the way he had trouble with [George] Foreman, but Foreman was a lot better than Klitschko."

Peltz cited another Philadelphia heavyweight, "Terrible" Tim Witherspoon, whose overhand right, impenetrable chin (forget the kayo loss to Bonecrusher Smith), and underrated skills might have been a nightmare for Klitschko. And as Peltz asked, "Who has Klitschko beaten that a prime Witherspoon wouldn't have?"

It's conceivable too that a different type of heavyweight altogether would trouble Klitschko, one without the big punch and aggression. One who was a better version of Chris Byrd before there was a Chris Byrd, a guy who specialized in making big, strong guys like Klitschko look foolish.

"Jimmy Young knew how to fight more than most guys of that era; he just had no pop," Peltz said. "If he could survive the bombs, he could beat just about anybody, he really could. Jimmy was raised against monsters, I mean the guys he sparred against in the gyms in Philadelphia. He certainly wouldn't be intimidated by Klitschko, and he'd figure out a way to beat him."

But Young isn't around anymore. Same for Witherspoon, Tyson, Frazier, and Foreman. Ditto for Holmes and Ibeabuchi, Liston, Bowe, and even Holyfield, more or less. Tough guys each. Klitschko might have beaten them too. We can't know for sure. And until one like them shows up again, Klitschko will remain The Man. You can't blame him for that. He's only doing what he's supposed to do. Like him or not, he's a fighter. ■

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MIXED B

Has Khan's Ability Over

By Don Stradley • Photos by Naoki Fukuda

Two things became clear as Amir Khan easily dispatched Zab Judah in Las Vegas last July.

1. Khan is no Ricky Hatton.
2. Khan is no Ricky Hatton.

Let's explain. First, Khan has become quite an accomplished boxer-puncher, the sort who can use his reach and footwork to pile up points and stay out of range. In comparison to his Brit predecessor Hatton, Khan is a veritable encyclopedia of boxing. Judah may not be among the sport's elite fighters, but he was expected to give Khan some trouble. Instead, he winged punches with no effect, and from the earliest moments of the fight, he looked sad and defeated.

LESSING
taken His Marketability

By the time Khan crumpled Judah with a right to the beltline in the fifth round, it was apparent that Khan has surpassed Hatton in terms of becoming a superb stylist.

Khan made no silly mistakes, he didn't maul or clinch, he didn't get tagged with unnecessary punches, and when he hurt Judah, he didn't dive in and smother his own work. Even when their heads clashed, which happens often in Khan's bouts, it was Judah who took the worst of it, while Khan was unmarked. Hatton usually came away from fights looking like he should be hanging upside down in a butcher shop.

Yet, for all of the improvements Khan has made under the eye of trainer Freddie Roach, Khan has yet to create anything

like the mania that surrounded Hatton. At Mandalay Bay the night he whipped Judah, there was none of the rowdy UK fanfare that we came to enjoy when Hatton fought. There was no singing. There were no blokes in the cheap seats banging cymbals and blowing horns.

In fact, there weren't many people there at all.

Khan-Judah drew an announced crowd of 7,229, but there were murmurs along the press row that the number was wishful thinking and that the large blocks of unsold seats were a sign that Khan may occasionally fight like a star, but he's not drawing like a star.

Of course, Khan's backers can always put a positive spin on things. The crowd, as anemic as it was, was a slight improvement over the less than 5,000 that attended Khan's bout with Marcos Maidana last year. And even if the crowd was closer to 6,000 than 7,000, the attendance was comparable to most Las Vegas fights that aren't starring a Pacquiao, a Mayweather, or even a Mosley.

Still, this was Khan's third bout in America. Hatton's third main event was against Jose Luis Castillo, a Las Vegas event that drew more than 13,000. Perhaps it's unfair to make the comparison—Castillo was very popular in Las Vegas after his wars with Diego Corrales, and Hatton was at the absolute pinnacle of his fame. It was also before the economy crashed and burned. Still, one wonders where Khan's fans are. Considering there were some junior welterweight title belts on the line—Khan added Judah's IBF strap to his own WBA belt—and that Judah has been part of some major fights in the past, the ticket sales had to be disappointing for the bout's promoters, Golden Boy and Main Events.

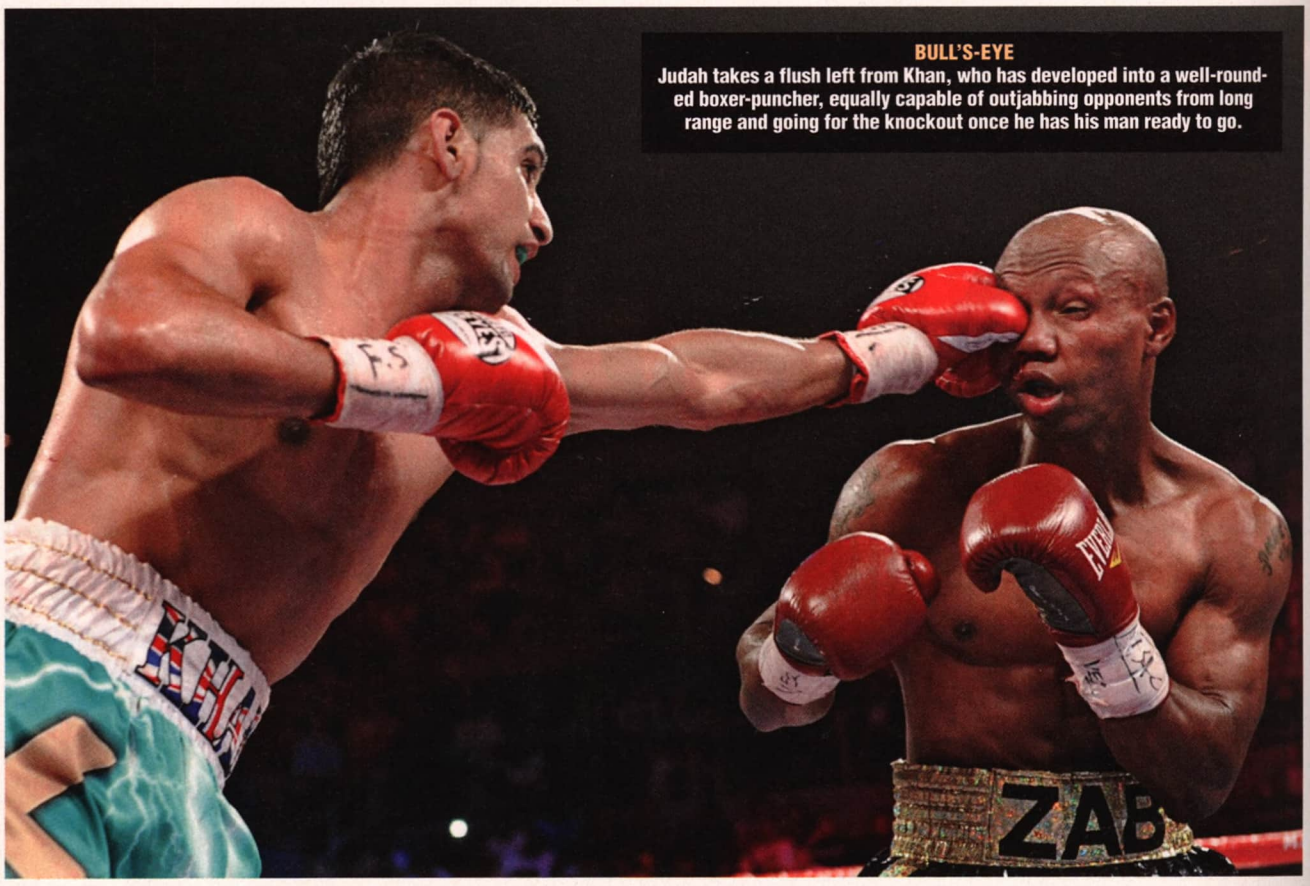
While Khan has yet to establish a rapport with the American audience, his relationship with the British fans has often been prickly. He may have hurt that relationship by leaving British promoter Frank Warren for Golden Boy and leaving Bolton for Hollywood to train at The Wild Card Gym with Roach. Message boards are filled with nasty comments from Khan bashers, many claiming he has "gone American," and forgotten his roots. One can't imagine Hatton leaving his bangers and mash for America's West Coast. Hatton was a dart throwing, pub-crawler. He was one of the lads. There was an easy identification between Hatton and his fans. Khan doesn't have that. Khan has his Bolton fans and his Muslim following and some interesting endorsement deals in the UK, but he's not one of the lads. His detractors have always viewed him as a kind of spoiled young prince. It's hard to say why. Some people just rub you the wrong way.

Khan has said part of the reason he bolted from Bolton was because he

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Welterweight
Location: Las Vegas, Nevada • **Date:** July 23, 2011 • **Television:** HBO
Promoters: Golden Boy, Main Events • **Referee:** Vic Drakulich (USA)

Amir Khan	Zab Judah
Age: 24 • **Weight:** 140	**Age:** 33 • **Weight:** 140
Residence: Bolton, England	**Residence:** Las Vegas, Nevada
Birthplace: Bolton, England	**Birthplace:** Brooklyn, New York
Record: 28-1 (18)	**Record:** 41-7 (28)
Ring Ranking: 1	**Ring Ranking:** 9



BULL'S-EYE
Judah takes a flush left from Khan, who has developed into a well-rounded boxer-puncher, equally capable of outjabbing opponents from long range and going for the knockout once he has his man ready to go.

IS REVENGE NECESSARY?

There is still a dark thundercloud looming over Amir Khan's reputation, and it goes by the name of Breidis Prescott. As the only man to defeat Khan in the pro ranks, Prescott's name still comes up as a potential opponent.

"He's definitely in the picture," Khan said after the Judah bout.

Khan would like a chance to erase the only blotch on his record. That's understandable. The great fighters in history almost always avenge their losses.

But does Prescott still matter? And would it still be a hot fight? After all, three years have passed. Khan has improved, while Prescott has not shown himself to be anything special.

Prescott is tall and throws bombs, but he has rarely connected on anyone with the shocking authority with which he hit Khan. Since scoring a first round kayo of Khan, Prescott has gone 4-2 (1). He won once by disqualification when an opponent bit him. When this issue went to pres, he was scheduled to meet Paul McCloskey in September.

If a rematch were made, Khan could probably cruise to a decision win. But would it be worth it? Some say no and feel Khan can go the rest of his career without fighting Prescott again. People will eventually forget the Prescott debacle and chalk it up to Khan's inexperience at the time.

With a Mayweather bout brewing, there is probably no chance that Golden Boy would put their budding star in the ring again with the guy who once destroyed him in less than a minute. Prescott may have to wait until Khan has no other options available.

He could be waiting a long time.

—D.S.

UNPLEASANT MEMORY
Prescott scores a stunning first-round kayo of Khan

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

couldn't focus on boxing over there. Too much media attention, he's said, too much scrutiny from fans. He has also said, in his darker moods, that there are many Brits who would like to see him fail. Khan has said that racism is a factor.

In a 2009 statement to the BBC, Khan said if he "were a white English fighter, maybe I'd have been a superstar in Britain." Khan added, "It's probably jealousy, but I can only say skin color does make a difference. I went to the Olympic Games and won a medal for Britain and then won a world title for Britain, but sometimes you don't see the appreciation."

Last April, he returned to England to defeat Paul McCloskey at the MEN Arena, drawing an attractive 17,000. It was a reasonably good homecoming, but, during the press gatherings prior to the Judah bout, Khan was still feeling a bit cool towards England. Khan said, "I definitely feel more appreciated here than in the UK. At this moment in time, I'm getting more love in America from boxing fans. People in the States realize I'm taking the big fights on and understand boxing a bit better."

That's no way to get songs rewritten with your name in the title.

A few days after beating Judah, Khan appeared on George Lopez' TBS talk show. Lopez has a large Mexican audience and probably more than a few are boxing fans. Lopez is also a friend of Oscar De La Hoya's, and the Golden Boy connection probably helped get Khan his first US talk show appearance. Khan was a good guest, boyish and charming, and, probably to Khan's relief, Lopez didn't bring up the M-word. In the UK, the press often cornered Khan with Muslim questions, which left him flustered and angry. Frank Warren felt the media was playing on Khan's naivety. "People don't ask David Haye what it's like to be black," Warren said.

But to Khan's frustration, he has found his Muslim background to be a problem in America, too, particularly when traveling in this post-9/11 era. He has routinely been held for as long as four hours when touching down in American airports. Even his family members have been detained. After a recent bad experience in Los Angeles, Khan twittered, "Landed in LA safe, but the customs took the piss again because I'm Muslim. Kept me in some holding room for over two hours. They were so arrogant and unprofessional. Didn't know how to talk to people."

"Names like Khan and Muhammad are commonly stopped," Khan's manager Asif Vali told *The Daily Telegraph*. "There are seven levels of security threat, with seven being the highest, and Amir has come in at the full seven. His name is Khan; he is a Muslim; between visits to the United States, he visits Pakistan; and he recently went to another Muslim country, Egypt, on holiday. All these things are taken into account by US Homeland Security."

Khan's troubles are not encouraging for his UK Muslim fans who may wish to fly to America.

Still, the buzz around Khan is getting louder. Something about his domination of Judah stirred the press. Roach has said that Khan could replace Manny Pacquiao as the top pound-for-pound fighter in the world. He's also said Khan has been a better and quicker student than Pacquiao. There's also talk from Golden Boy CEO

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BIOGRAPHY
Richard T. Slone, Painter
b. 1974 (England)

Richard T. Slone has established himself as one of the World's most sought-after fine artists, a multi-award winner whose paintings and prints are collected throughout the world.

His work is acquired by art connoisseurs and high-society. He has been hailed by the media as the 'Next Great Artist'.

Owners of his originals include Donald Trump, Nelson Mandela, Hugh Hefner, Oscar de la Hoya and Muhammad Ali. He is the official artist of the International Boxing Hall of Fame, and an official artist of the UFC where he designed the 'Ultimate' clothing line. Slone, a former boxer, is one of the most accomplished sports artist's in the world today. His works are in high demand and often associated with high profile events.

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Richard Schaefer that Khan is heading for the welterweight class with the ultimate goal being a bout with Floyd Mayweather. Roach has boldly said Khan will be ready for the winner of the Mayweather-Victor Ortiz bout next year. To Khan's credit, he remains levelheaded when talking about his future. He'd like a bout with Mayweather,

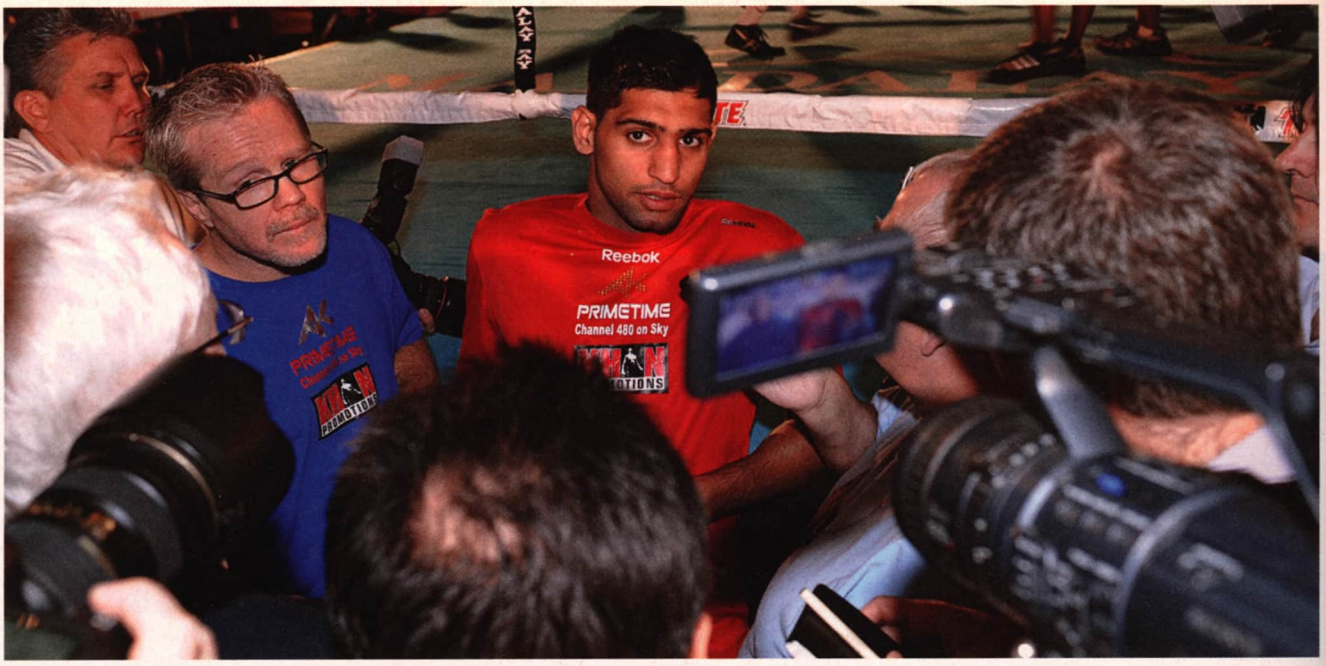
FAIR OR FOUL?
When Khan stopped Judah with a body-shot in the fifth round, Zab claimed it was a low blow, but referee Vic Drakulich wasn't buying it. Most observers and much of the media agree that it was a legal punch that left Judah on the canvas, doubled over in pain.

but, during the postfight chat in Las Vegas, he didn't seem to be in a hurry.

"Right now, it's about moving up the pound-for-pound rankings," said Khan. "It's about collecting titles."

But can collecting belts help Khan sell tickets in America? Not only does Khan seem suspended between two nations, the devastating knockout loss to Breidis Prescott still lingers in our memories. Generally speaking, chinny Brits do not become major attractions in America.

Of course, Khan could learn a few things from Lennox Lewis. If Khan has to follow in the footsteps of Hatton, Lewis had to follow the beloved Frank Bruno. Lewis never had anything like Bruno's loyal supporters. Bruno was the humble everyman, the gallant British underdog, while Lewis seemed aloof. Lewis was a chinny Brit too. Still, Lewis created a niche for himself here. He did it by winning consistently. He did it by scoring knockouts. They weren't singing songs about Lewis,



MOBBED BY THE MEDIA

Khan has garnered decent media attention in the United States but hasn't been that big of a gate attraction. Additional performances like his kayo of Judah will help, but it's unlikely he'll ever have the sort of following that former British hero Ricky Hatton enjoyed.

HOW FAR CAN KHAN GO?

Trainer Roach, pictured with Khan following the Judah victory, believes his pupil is ready for Floyd Mayweather. Khan, however, would like to fight the winner of the Marcos Maidana-Robert Guerrero bout next.

but there were usually some Brits rolling out the Union Jack at Lewis' Las Vegas bouts. American fans grew to respect Lewis as well.

Khan could create a Lewis-like niche for himself in America. It will only take some victories over top opponents to make his case.

Erik Morales has been mentioned as a possible opponent, but he may not be the right guy to change Khan's fortunes here. Although Morales put up a game effort against Maidana, it was probably his last gasp, rather than a clear indication of where he fits in nowadays. Khan has already beaten enough over the hill opponents. Beating Morales won't do anything for Khan except give him more target practice.

Timothy Bradley was originally scheduled to face Khan but was replaced by Judah due to financial, promoter, and managerial problems. Bradley has some belts that Khan might like to own, but both fighters have a history of butting, and their bout would probably end after two rounds with a sickening clash of heads.

A better idea would be the winner of the Robert Guerrero-Maidana bout in August.

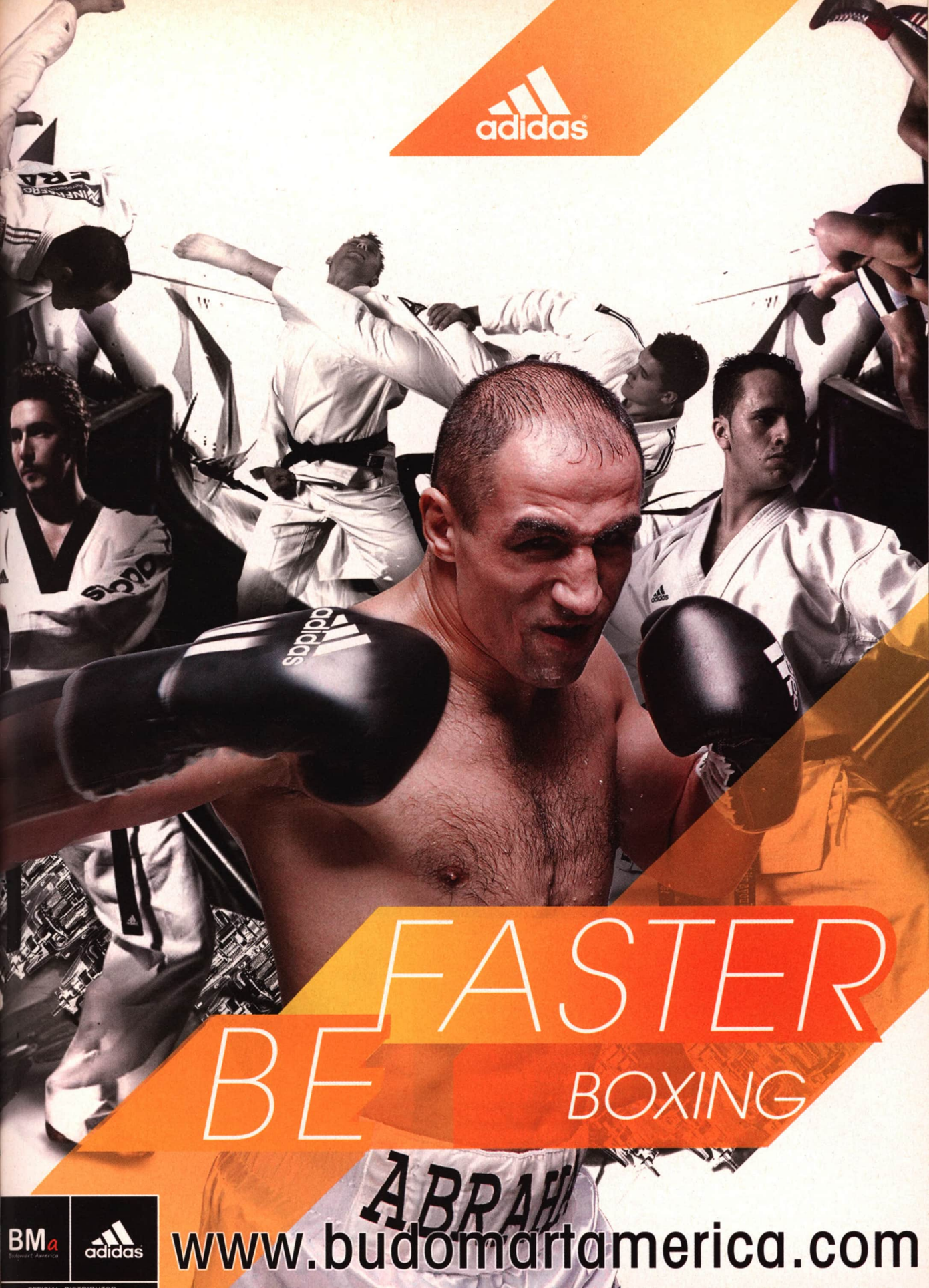
"If Guerrero beats Maidana, that could be the fight in December. I leave it to Golden Boy, but, in my eyes, Maidana is a bigger fighter, a bigger person," Khan told the press after beating Judah.

Kell Brook is an undefeated UK welterweight, ranked in the top 10 by The Ring. A Khan-Brook bout might be a hit in the UK. But Brook shouldn't get too excited, for the other M-word has been brought up, and that's "Mayweather."

If Golden Boy has decided that Khan is on a direct course for Mayweather, there won't be too many fights in between. And if Khan pulls off an upset and beats Mayweather next year, that will be one more thing that separates Khan from Ricky Hatton.

We'll bet his attendance figures improve too. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.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MORE THAN JUST A PRELUDE TO PACQUIAO

Manny's On Our Minds, But Mayweather-Ortiz Is No Tune-Up

By Eric Raskin

When there's an elephant in the room, it sits quietly, trying to go unnoticed, and everyone does their best to pretend it isn't there. So what animal could we use as a metaphor for something that has entered the room uninvited and become the center of attention? It would have to be something that makes a lot of noise. Let's go with the world's most annoyingly talkative animal (now that Oprah is off the air, anyway), the Congo African grey parrot.

As it pertains to the upcoming Floyd Mayweather-Victor Ortiz fight, Manny Pacquiao is the Congo African grey parrot in the room.

Nobody is ignoring "Pac-Man's" presence, and nobody is really trying to ignore it. He looms over everything. He's that question Mayweather can't escape, which makes him a question Ortiz can't escape. In fact, Mayweather has taken to personally injecting Pacquiao's name into the proceedings whenever possible, which suggests one of two things: Either Mayweather isn't properly focused on the task at hand or he's using the name of the one active boxer who *might* be a bigger star than he is to sell extra pay-per-views on September 17. Before you try to rule out the latter scenario, remember that this is a man who calls himself "Money."

You can't blame Mayweather for invoking Pacquiao's name. You can't blame the media for following Mayweather's lead (as this article you're reading right now appears to be doing). You can't blame the fans for being more focused on the possibility of Pacquiao vs. Mayweather than on the reality of Mayweather vs. Ortiz. These are all natural responses.

But Mayweather, the media, and the fans would all be making a huge mistake if they got caught looking past the fight in front of them. This is not Juan Manuel Marquez vs. Likar Ramos. This is not a tune-up. Mayweather-Ortiz is a legit fight that is actually, definitely happening, and, as we all know, a Congo African grey parrot in the hand is worth two in the bush.

It was during the first of two press conferences announcing the fight, at the Hudson Theater in New York, that Mayweather first turned the conversation toward Pacquiao.

"Do I want the Pacquiao fight?" he said. "Absolutely, if that is what the fans want." Later that day, when ESPN's Brian Kenny interviewed Mayweather via satellite, more time was spent discussing Pacquiao—with Floyd reiterating that he "absolutely" wants to fight the Filipino superstar—than was spent discussing Ortiz.

"It's a slap in my face to talk about Manny Pacquiao at this press conference," Ortiz said when the Pacquiao-Mayweather talk continued the next day at the Los Angeles stop on the brief media tour. "If he's overlooking me, he's got a problem."

Indeed, we all might have a problem if we're mentally bypassing the Ortiz fight and salivating over Pacquiao vs. Mayweather, for two reasons. First, Mayweather might be talking out of his backside when he says he wants to make the dream fight to end all dream fights. Since Pacquiao-Mayweather first became a near-reality at the end of 2009, the undefeated five-division titlist's actions have repeatedly suggested disinterest in the superfight. What's happening in the buildup to the Ortiz bout could prove to be nothing more than his latest, greatest tease.

But the second reason, and the one more worth delving into, is that we'd be foolish not to appreciate what we have in Mayweather vs. Ortiz. Just look at THE RING ratings at 147 pounds. Pacquiao is ranked first. Ortiz is the very next name you'll find. So as far as opponents go for Mayweather's first fight in 16 months (that layoff is the reason Money is currently unranked), Ortiz is the most worthy welterweight among those who didn't already have a fall fight scheduled. It's not like Mayweather covered his eyes, poked his finger randomly at some sanctioning body's ratings, and came up

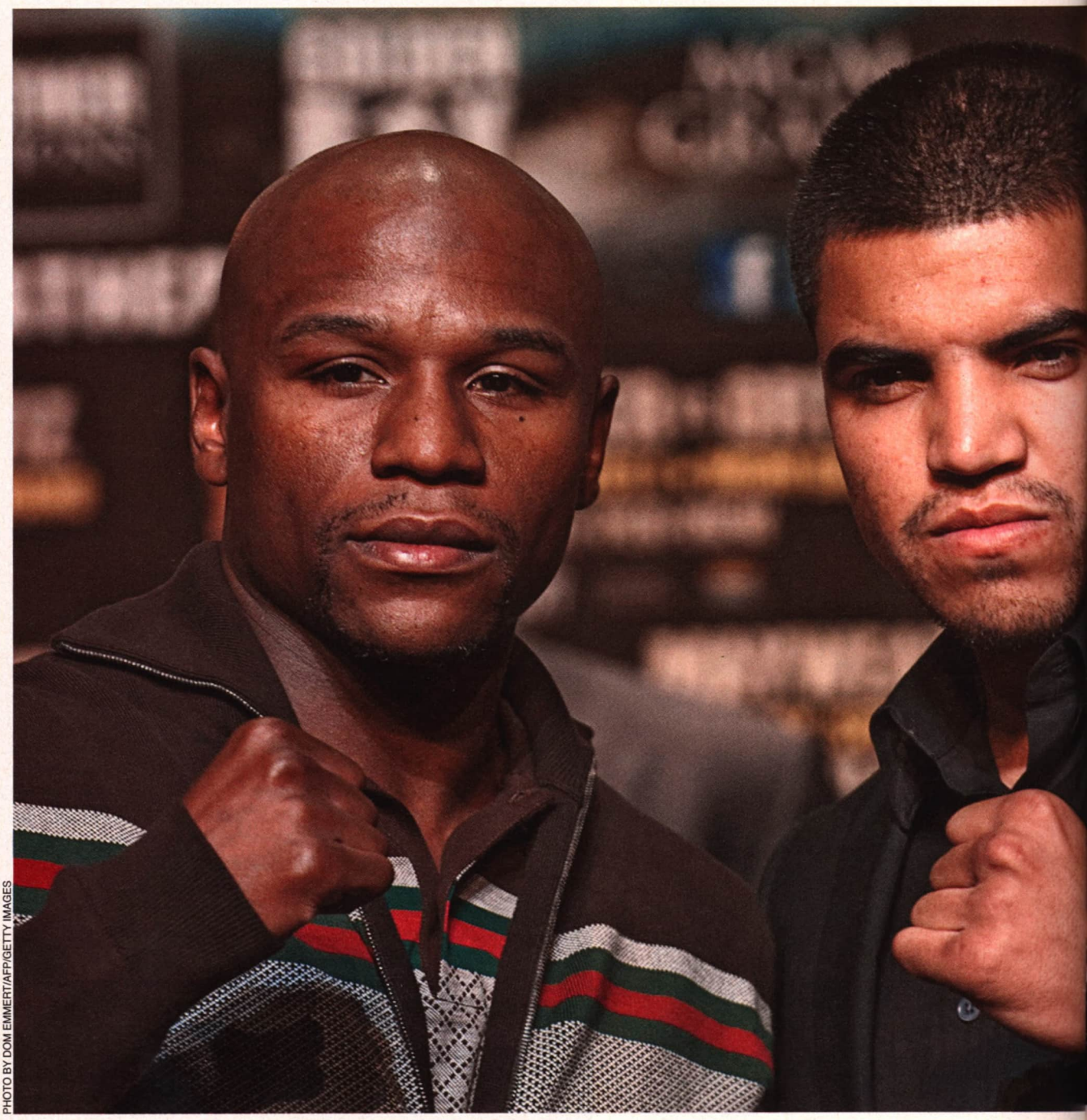


PHOTO BY DOM EMMERT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

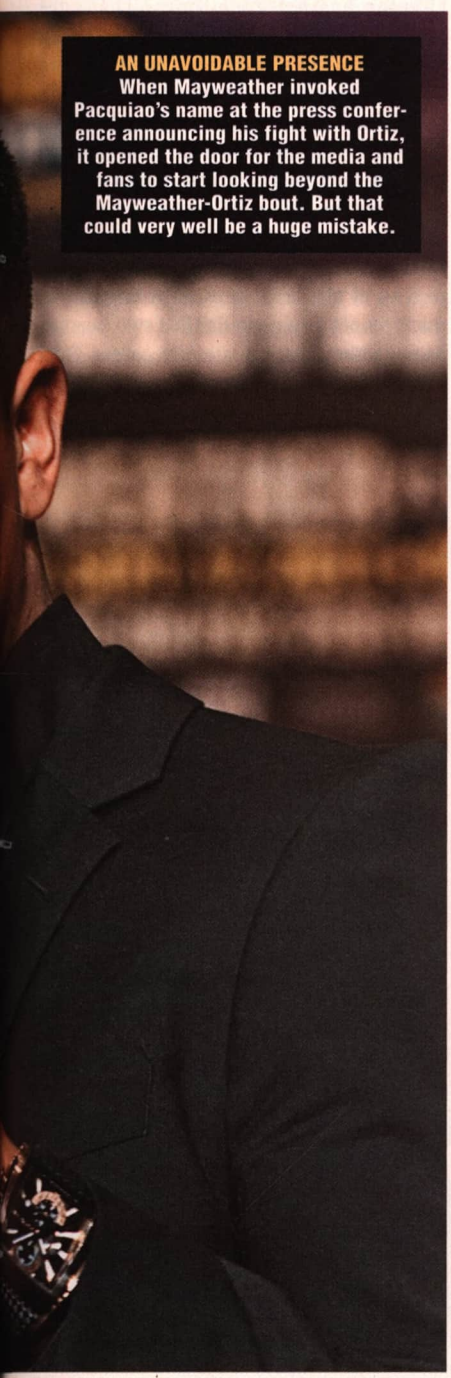
with Rafal Jackiewicz or Viktor Plotnykov. Ortiz has a lot going for him.

For starters, he's a hot fighter. He's a guy who matters *right now* because he's fresh off a thrilling, four-knockdown (two apiece) victory over previously unbeaten Andre Berto in a high-profile HBO-televised showdown.

He's an exciting fighter. Even his one recent defeat, the infamous sixth-round surrender against Marcos Maidana in June '09, was a Fight of the Year candidate. Other than the late rounds of his draw against Lamont Peterson, it's hard to think of a significant stretch of an Ortiz fight that was light on action.

He's a puncher. With 22 knockouts among 29 wins, Ortiz may not be the second coming of Tito Trinidad, but he's produced enough quick kayos over recognizable names (KO 1 Carlos Maussa, KO 2 Jeffrey Resto, KO 2 Mike Arnaoutis, KO 3 Vivian Harris) to suggest that if he lands the right shot, he can do real damage. Against anybody.

And he's young—but not so young that people think he's being rushed into this fight. Ortiz is 24, an age that throughout much of boxing history was considered a fighter's absolute prime (though it's fair to suggest that number has crept higher in recent years). This is significant because Mayweather hasn't fought anybody under 28 in more than six years. Not to denigrate Mayweather's quality of opposition because he has been taking on A-list foes for the most part, but here are his last eight opponents and their ages: Shane Mosley, 38; Juan Manuel Marquez, 36; Ricky Hatton, 29; Oscar De La Hoya, 34; Carlos Baldomir, 35; Zab Judah, 28; Sharmba Mitchell, 35; and Arturo Gatti, 33. Again, most were quality fighters. None were totally over



AN UNAVOIDABLE PRESENCE
When Mayweather invoked Pacquiao's name at the press conference announcing his fight with Ortiz, it opened the door for the media and fans to start looking beyond the Mayweather-Ortiz bout. But that could very well be a huge mistake.

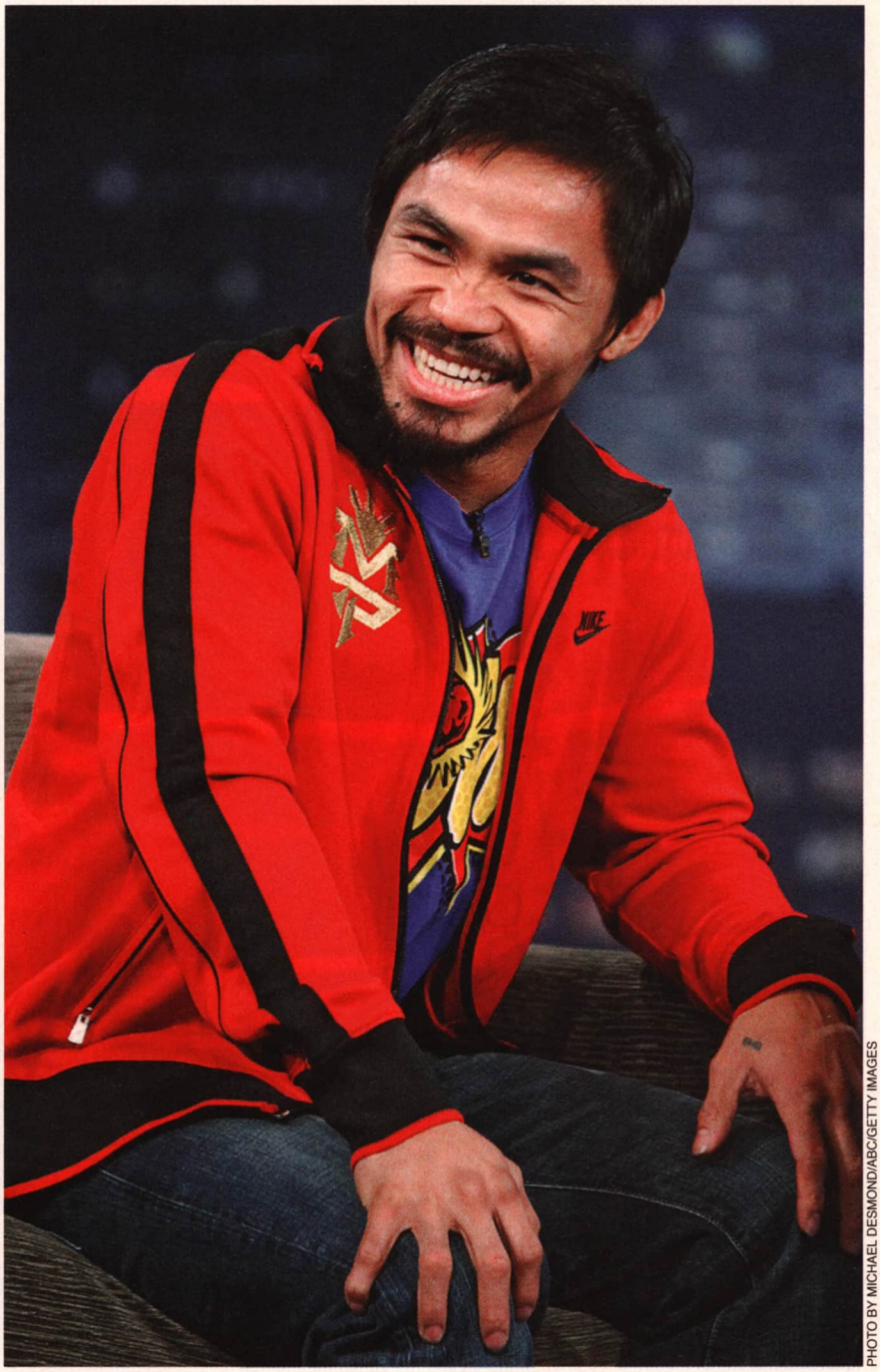


PHOTO BY MICHAEL DESMOND/ABC/GETTY IMAGES

the hill (although Mitchell was close and, in hindsight, so was Mosley). But none were youthful and fresh (except arguably Judah, though he was coming off a defeat to Baldomir). Ortiz is still an energetic puppy, someone who believes his best days lie ahead of him. That doesn't mean he's going to defeat Mayweather, of course, but it makes this fight compelling in a specific way in which most of Floyd's recent fights haven't been.

Basically, this is the first time Mayweather has played the role of old master trying to tame the young lion, and, even if you expect him to play that role adroitly, you have to admit it's interesting that he's trying on a get-up he's never worn before.

And the juxtaposition between the 24-year-old Ortiz and the 34-year-old Mayweather, who used to call himself "Pretty Boy" but now is showing his age facially (in part because of an ill-advised attempt to grow a Fu Manchu), is notable not just for what one guy's youth might mean, but also for what the other fellow's age might mean. Despite Mayweather's unassailable boxing technique that should leave him well-equipped to navigate such pitfalls of the aging process as dulling reflexes, you just never know when a guy might "get old overnight." Especially when "overnight" spans 16 months.

Mayweather will have fought just twice in a three-year, nine-month period when he steps into the ring against Ortiz. And even before that, he was averaging just two fights per year for six years. The guy has not been busy as a prizefighter. Busy taking a Zippo to $100 bills? Yes. Busy answering the door for police officers? Yes. But not busy practicing his profession.

Contrast his activity with Ortiz, who has never had a six-month layoff in his pro career. In that same 45-month span in which Mayweather has competed twice, Ortiz has made 11 appearances.

"I have to applaud Floyd for taking the fight with Victor Ortiz. He might have just challenged himself too much because he hasn't fought in 16 months. Victor Ortiz was active. He is 10 years younger. He can hurt Floyd Mayweather," said Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer, obviously doing a sell-job but also accurately highlighting the reasons Ortiz is live as an underdog.

Unfortunately for Ortiz and his backers, there are also reasons to question just how live he'll be. He *seems* to have shed his image as a quitter (acquired against Maidana) and a passive pugilist (acquired against Peterson) by being aggressive and brave against Berto. But that was just one fight. And it happens to be "Vicious Victor's" only victory against an in-his-prime, world-class opponent. So if you want to make the case that he's the number-two welterweight in the world more by default than by any consistency or excess of evidence, you could easily do so.

Also, in terms of pure skill, this is Eric Clapton against Paul Jonas. That's the chief reason that you'd have to bet $750 on Mayweather to win $100 (insert your own burning-bill joke) at the host MGM Grand's sports book. Mayweather is one of the best defensive fighters of all-time, a guy who rarely makes mistakes, rarely gets hit with two punches in a row, and is devastating (if not heavy-handed) with his pull-counter right and snappy left hook. Ortiz is not hard to find at all; he's suffered four times as many knockdowns in the last two years as Mayweather has in his entire career. Ortiz is by no means a raw slugger—far from

VICIOUS POWER
As Andre Berto well knows, Ortiz hits hard enough to turn a fight around with one shot. Many observers believe that a kayo is Ortiz' best chance of springing a gigantic upset against Mayweather.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

it—but almost every fighter alive is grossly overmatched in the skill department against Mayweather, and Ortiz is no exception.

That Ortiz has bounced back so completely from his defeat to Maidana and the criticism that followed is commendable. But that he lost to Maidana in the first place remains troubling when you consider the ability gap between the Argentine clubber and Mayweather.

Then again … Ortiz is undefeated as a welterweight. Sure, he's only had one fight as a full-fledged 147-pounder (plus a slew of slightly-over-the-junior-welter-limit bouts). But he claimed he was draining himself to make 140 pounds, and, wouldn't you know, he looked like a completely different fighter against Berto than he had in any previous engagement. If you combine increased physical comfort with what appeared to be the clearing of a mental hurdle against Berto, then it might be that Ortiz is a greater threat to Mayweather's undefeated record than most observers are giving him credit for.

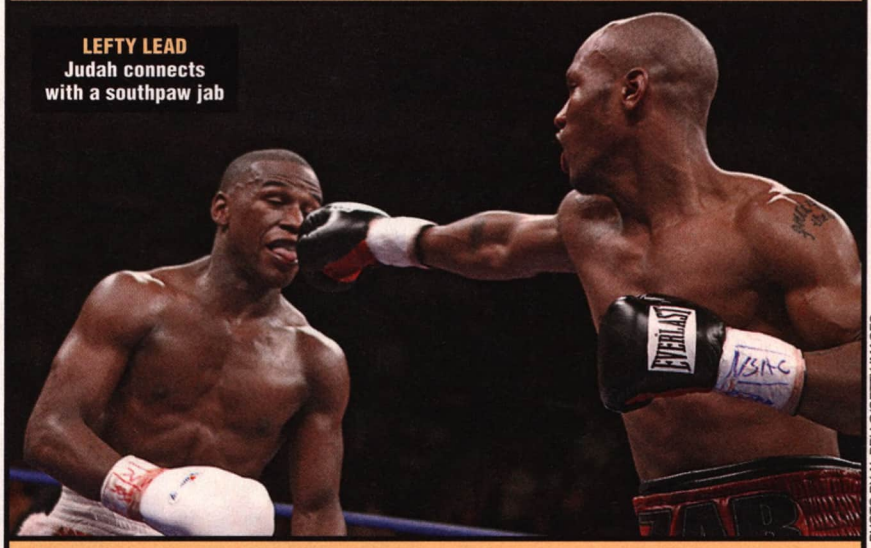
At the very least, he's enough of a threat that nobody should be ignoring him in favor of Pacquiao. Or, if you insist on placing Pac-Man at the fore of your Mayweather-

Ortiz discussions, at least spend a moment pondering Pacquiao vs. Ortiz, a fight that becomes the most meaningful and lucrative in the sport should Mayweather suffer an upset on September 17. For what it's worth, stylistically, Pacquiao-Ortiz looks a lot more entertaining on paper than Pacquiao-Mayweather does.

Opinions vary greatly on how much of a chance Ortiz has of beating Mayweather and thus positioning himself to meet Pacquiao, but this has been a year loaded with upsets

MAYWEATHER'S SOUTHPAW SEASONING

Ortiz fights out of a left-handed stance. So does a certain Filipino who's floating out there as a possible future opponent. Mayweather has no shortage of experience against southpaws, having fought six of them over the course of his 41-fight career:



LEFTY LEAD
Judah connects with a southpaw jab

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

SOUTHPAW	DATE	RESULT
Reggie Sanders	**11-30-96**	**Mayweather W 4**
Rapidly advancing Floyd faced a lefty in just his second pro fight and cruised, 40-36 (twice) and 39-37		
Bobby Giepert	**4-12-97**	**Mayweather KO 1**
Underneath De La Hoya-Whitaker, "Pretty Boy" scored two knockdowns in 90 seconds and ended Giepert's career		
Jesus Chavez	**7-12-97**	**Mayweather KO 5**
No, not that *Jesus Chavez; Mayweather knocked down this journeyman in both the fourth and fifth rounds*		
DeMarcus Corley	**5-22-04**	**Mayweather W 12**
Floyd mostly dominated, except one moment in round four when "Chop Chop" hurt him with a very un-southpaw right hand		
Sharmba Mitchell	**11-19-05**	**Mayweather KO 6**
Faded, blown-up ex-titlist was an easy opponent for Mayweather's forgettable 147-pound debut		
Zab Judah	**4-8-06**	**Mayweather W 12**
After a rocky first four rounds, Floyd figured out the speedy southpaw in a fight remembered for near-riot		

—E.R.

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RUST FACTOR
By the time Mayweather enters the ring to fight Ortiz, he will have been out of action 16 months since he beat Mosley. Will inactivity finally catch up with the 34-year-old Mayweather?

PHOTO BY CHRIS GOLDEN/GETTY IMAGES

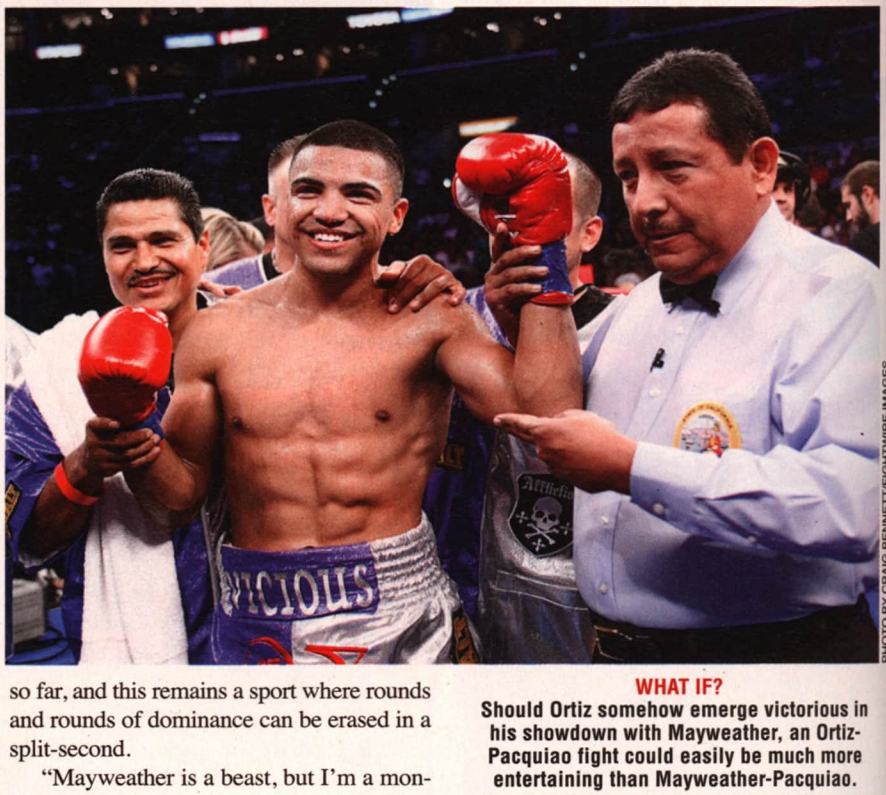

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

so far, and this remains a sport where rounds and rounds of dominance can be erased in a split-second.

"Mayweather is a beast, but I'm a monster," Ortiz insisted. "If Mayweather wants to box, I will box. If he wants to bang, I will bang.

"I am tired of hearing that he is fighting Manny Pacquiao next. He is fighting me next!"

That he is. If Larry Merchant or Max Kellerman wants to hop in the ring at about 9 p.m. Las Vegas time on September 17 and fire off questions about Pacquiao, they should feel free. But until then, we would all be wise to focus on the fight in front of us. Even if it turns out Mayweather genuinely does want to fight Pacquiao, he's signed up for another job first. When that job is complete, let's see whether Mayweather is the first man HBO interviews and take it from there. ■

WHAT IF?
Should Ortiz somehow emerge victorious in his showdown with Mayweather, an Ortiz-Pacquiao fight could easily be much more entertaining than Mayweather-Pacquiao.

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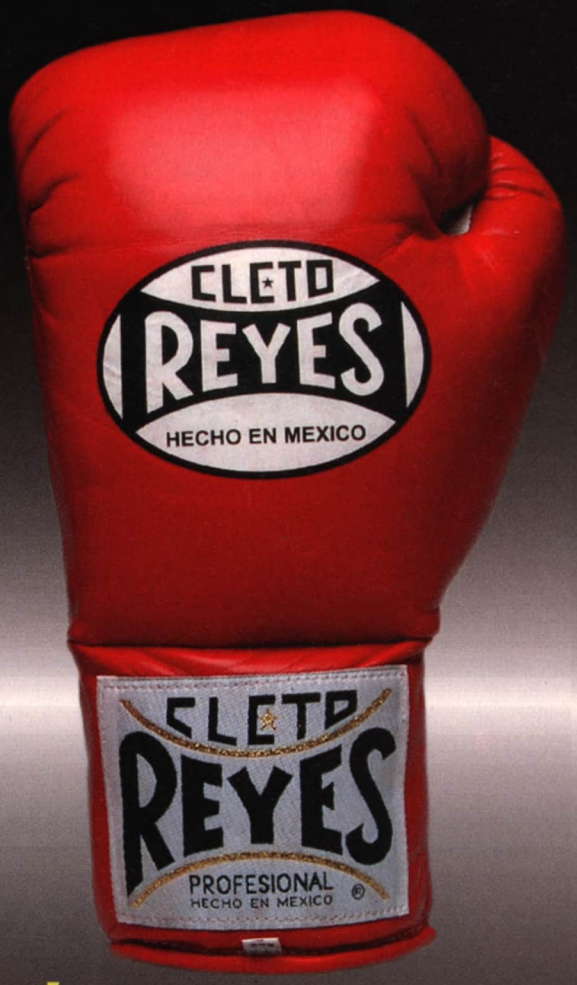

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Five Things Ortiz Must Do

By Douglas Fischer

1. Be Himself: Ortiz must not fight out of character. The Mayweather mystique has caused many opponents to try to be something they're not when they step into the ring with him. Oscar De La Hoya tried to become a pressure fighter. Shane Mosley pretended to be a boxer. Terrible decisions on the part of the veterans. De La Hoya would have been better served jabbing from the outside. Mosley should have attacked from the outset. Jose Luis Castillo had unprecedented success against Mayweather because he didn't fight the American favorite any differently than any other opponent. A fighter either has the talent, skill, and style to compete with Mayweather or he doesn't. Veteran trainer Joe Goossen believes Ortiz has the style and attributes to trouble and perhaps even beat Mayweather. "He's a big, powerful, quick-handed southpaw," Goossen said. "That's a combination that will trouble any fighter, including Mayweather. I would have Ortiz watch Mayweather's fight with Zab Judah. Floyd had a hard time the first five rounds with Zab. Floyd's a great chess player in the ring, but you can't play chess against a southpaw if he's as quick as you are. The southpaw is always going to have a tactical advantage because he's so familiar with right-handed fighters. Judah countered Mayweather from the outside in the early rounds, so it forced Floyd to change his tactics. He put his hands up, elbows in, and started marching Judah down. Then he started getting to him. Zab faded in the second half of the fight, as he usually does, so he helped Mayweather to an extent. Victor won't fade like Judah did, and he is very good on the inside."

2. Rediscover His Jab: Ortiz is a natural counterpuncher who rarely uses the jab to set up his power shots. He will paw and feint with his jab, but he rarely sticks it out there with authority. However, he has a quick and powerful jab when he wants to use it, and he may want to dust it off for the Mayweather fight. "A southpaw jab is something that is really valuable in a fight against a right-handed fighter," said Goossen. "It comes from the opposite side of where the jab normally comes from if you're an orthodox fighter, and, a lot of times, the right-handed fighter moves his right hand from the defensive position by his face in order to try and parry it. That leaves him open for counter punches."

That appeared to happen to Mayweather during the early rounds of his bouts against Judah and DeMarcus Corley, who is also a southpaw. "The jab is the key weapon in the battle for control of distance between a right-hander and left-hander," Goossen said. "Ortiz' jab is going to be more necessary in this fight than ever because Mayweather may have the best jab in the business, and, if you let Floyd establish distance with it, you've got a long night ahead of you. I think it would behoove Ortiz to do triple time practicing the jab in the gym for this fight."

RARE SIGHT
Ortiz snaps a southpaw jab into the face of Antonio Diaz. "Viscous Vic" doesn't use his jab very much, but a good jab will be essential if he's going to have a chance of beating Mayweather.

PHOTO BY TOM BARNES/FIGHTWIREIMAGES

To Beat Mayweather

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY

SEIZE THE MOMENT
Ortiz tears into Berto en route to his most significant win yet. If he hurts Mayweather, Ortiz will have be just as aggressive as he was against Berto and go for the finish.

3. Cut Off The Ring: One of the many things Castillo did well against Mayweather in their first fight was gradually limit the space the boxing master had to work within. The Mexican technician made the ring seem smaller for Mayweather with each passing round until the boxer had no choice but to exchange punches with his back to the ropes. That situation favored the bigger man, of course, and veteran trainer Ken Adams believes Ortiz must emulate Castillo if he hopes to beat Mayweather. "Ortiz' best shot at beating Mayweather is to knock him out," Adams said. "In other words, he's got a puncher's chance, a good puncher's chance, because he does have one-punch knockout power, but, to land that big shot, he's got to apply pressure, pressure, pressure. He'll have to cut the ring off on Mayweather, keep his hands up, and get close enough to land his power."

4. Don't Rush: Ortiz is the bigger, stronger, younger man, but that doesn't mean he should attack Mayweather with reckless abandon or be in a rush to land his power punches. Mayweather has faced many punchers and pressure fighters during his Hall of Fame-worthy career. He knows how to counter aggressive moves, survive rough spots, and take advantage of any mistake caused by impetuous actions. "Ortiz needs to press Mayweather, but he's got to be careful about it because that will open him up to being hit." Goossen agrees: "Mayweather's elusiveness makes him dangerous because he'll let you tire yourself out and then mistreat you down the stretch. It's not Ortiz' nature to stay on the outside. Based on his last performance, against Berto, he's going to do what works for him, which is being the aggressor, applying pressure, and looking to get inside. He's going to want to press, which could play into Mayweather's hands. I would look to employ what worked for Judah. I would try to get Ortiz to box from a distance in the early rounds. I'd see how well he could confound Mayweather with savvy southpaw technique. If Mayweather gets frustrated and starts to put the march on Ortiz, as he did with Judah, I think that will play into Ortiz' hands."

5. Don't Hesitate: Mayweather is the sport's best defensive fighter, but he's not untouchable. He was clearly rocked in the early rounds of his bouts with Corley and Shane Mosley. Judah should have been credited for a technical knockdown midway through the second round of their fight. Judah did not try to take advantage of Mayweather during his momentary loss of balance. Corley did not put his foot on the gas pedal when he buzzed Mayweather. Mosley simply wasn't able to pull the trigger. If Ortiz catches and rocks Mayweather at any point during the fight, he had better seize the moment. "Mayweather has been inactive, and he may have gotten old," Adams said. "It's possible that he could be rusty early in the fight, and that's Ortiz' greatest chance to catch him. If he does catch Floyd with a flush shot, he'd better jump on him because the longer the fight goes, the more Mayweather will make him miss and make him pay." Goossen doesn't believe Ortiz will let such a moment pass: "He won't pull a Mosley in there. Shane had a great career, but, let's face it, Mayweather had the advantage of being the younger man. I think Ortiz is young enough and confident enough to go for it if he hurts Mayweather. Look at the Berto fight. I don't think he's going to be intimidated or hesitant." ■

Douglas Fischer is co-editor of RingTV.com.

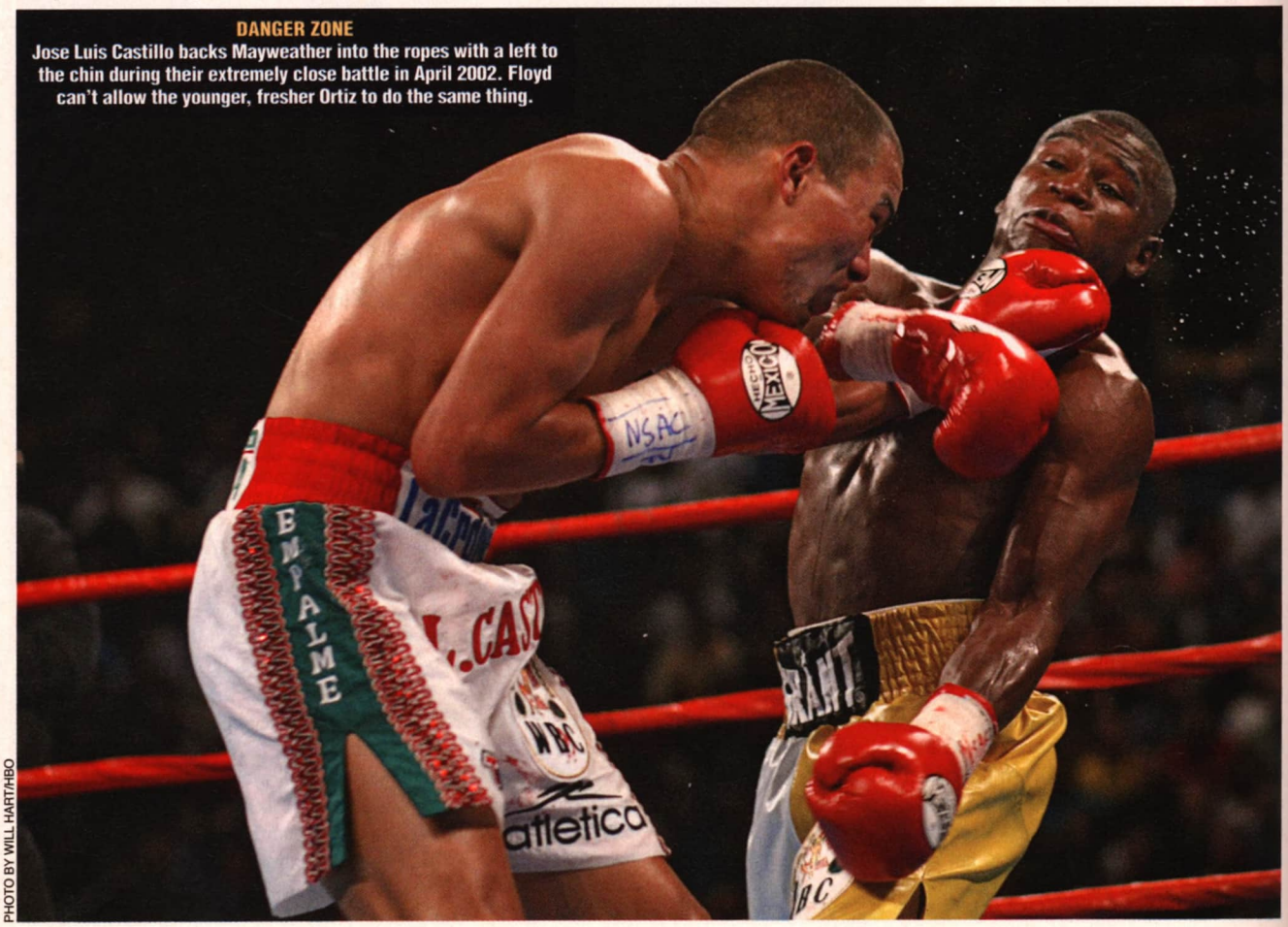
Five Things Mayweather

By Michael Rosenthal

1. Box: Trainer Freddie Roach was asked to name the single most-important thing Mayweather must do to beat Ortiz. He responded with no hesitation: "Box." Mayweather has built a Hall of Fame career on his sublime skills, not on dangerous exchanges against fighters with a fraction of his talent. He's a master technician, not a reckless warrior. Common sense tells us that all he has to do to beat a relative novice like Ortiz is what he's done since he turned professional in 1996, use his ability, ridiculous speed, and exceptional ring intelligence from beginning to end. Ortiz undoubtedly will try to make him fight by applying relentless pressure and playing rough, as Jose Luis Castillo did in two close and compelling losses to Mayweather in 2002. Mayweather's job will be to keep his cool and use his once-in-a-generation gifts, including his legendary shoulder-rolling ability to avoid taking meaningful punches. In other words, the fight is likely his to lose. "Anyone who fights Mayweather is going to have a difficult time," said Roach, who trains rival Manny Pacquiao. "He's a very clever boxer, very smart. And he doesn't take chances. He just has to box. That's what he does best." And there's no reason to believe he'll do anything else.

2. Stay On The Outside: Ortiz probably will try to do to Mayweather what he did in his sensational title-winning victory over Andre Berto in April, bull his way inside and wreak havoc. Mayweather's mission will be to keep his hungry young opponent on the outside, where it will be next to impossible for the upstart to do any damage and Mayweather can pick him apart. Mayweather must make Ortiz eat his formidable jab from the opening bell to establish a hard-to-penetrate barrier and take advantage of his foe's aggressiveness by allowing him to walk into right hands, which theoretically will score the points he needs to win the fight and possibly hurt Ortiz. Mayweather doesn't do much dancing or running, contrary to common assumptions. He's typically able to avoid punches with his feet planted, a testament to his boxing genius. He probably will have to get on his bicycle against Ortiz at times, though. Ortiz will on occasion get inside of the jab, which could spell danger. No shame in retreating out of trouble when necessary. Mayweather's mantra might be: Keep Ortiz away and win an easy decision.

3. Avoid The Big Punch: One thing that seemed to surprise Berto was Ortiz' punching power. He hurts you when he hits you. Even in his devastating loss to Marcos Maidana, he put the tough Argentine down three times. And consider this remarkable tidbit: Ortiz' handlers claim that every one of his 33 opponents has hit the canvas. That seems too astounding to be true, but you can't argue with their message: Beware! And we saw in Mayweather's one-sided victory over Shane Mosley that he can be stunned.



DANGER ZONE
Jose Luis Castillo backs Mayweather into the ropes with a left to the chin during their extremely close battle in April 2002. Floyd can't allow the younger, fresher Ortiz to do the same thing.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Must Do To Beat Ortiz

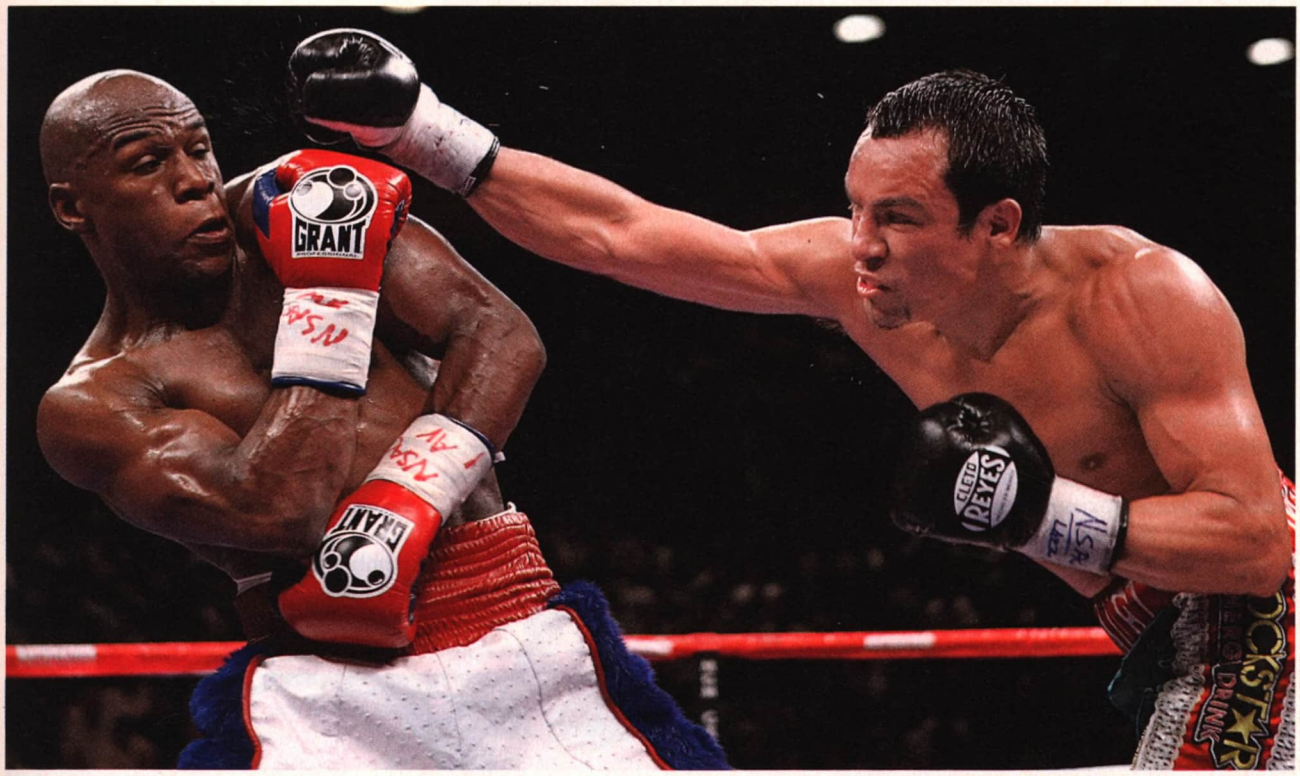


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

SHOULDER ROLL
Mayweather will have to utilize his defensive ability to avoid Ortiz' big guns, the same as he did against the smaller and older Juan Manuel Marquez in September 2009.

Mosley landed two hard rights that rocked him in the second round. Nonetheless, Mayeather demonstrated admirable resilience by recovering nicely and going on to win a pathetically one-sided decision. And we should point out that there's a big difference between Ortiz' previous opponents and Mayweather, who is one of the best defensive fighters ever and tougher than he's given credit for. Still, we must assume that Ortiz can hurt Mayweather if a faded Mosley can. And you can be sure that Ortiz would go in for the kill with frightening ferocity, which Mosley didn't do. Said Roach: "One punch can change everything. Victor is big and strong."

4. Overcome The Layoff: Mayweather had been out of the ring for 21 months when he faced Juan Manuel Marquez in September 2009. The layoff didn't matter. Marquez was too small and too slow at welterweight to cope with Mayweather's speed and skills, in spite of any rust. Mayweather will have been out of the ring for 16 months when he faces Ortiz. We'll see whether that's a problem for him. Ortiz certainly isn't as accomplished as Marquez, but he is bigger and faster than the future Hall of Famer at 147 pounds, which means he might be in a better position to take advantage if Mayweather's timing is off or he tires in the late rounds. And remember: Mayweather is 34. The older a fighter gets; the harder it is to pick up where he left off in his last fight. Roach doesn't believe rust will be a significant factor but allows for the possibility. "I think Mayweather is the type of guy who trains every day," said Roach, meaning he is more likely to stay sharp than someone who remains out of the gym. "Mayweather hasn't fought for a year and a half, though. Will that be a factor? I don't know. The gym is the gym, and the fight is the fight. Those are two different things."

5. Be Prepared For A Real Challenge: Mayweather arguably has faced just two legitimate challenges since his two-fight series with Jose Luis Castillo in 2002, Zab Judah in 2006 and Oscar De La Hoya in 2007, two fighters with the size and ability to compete with him. Some believe Ortiz, 24, fits into the overmatched category given his relative lack of experience. Others aren't so sure. Ortiz might compensate for any lack of seasoning and ability (compared to Mayweather) with enthusiasm and power. Trainer Emanuel Steward believes Ortiz has a legitimate chance to win. "Mayweather is going to be facing a competitive young fighter, something he hasn't faced in about 10 years," Steward said. "Ortiz is a high-spirited fighter, which is totally new for Mayweather. Neither he nor [Manny] Pacquiao have experienced that in a long time. They've been fighting marquee names, but not a strong, young fighter like this. I think Ortiz is bigger and stronger than even Shane Mosley." Steward went on to say that Ortiz will succeed in taking Mayweather out of his comfort zone. How he responds to that could determine the outcome of the fight. "He better have the desire," Steward said of Mayweather. "He better place his pot shots carefully and not get into a shootout. This is a very tough fight. I think it's his toughest in 10 years. HBO stumbled into what I think will be a phenomenal fight." ■

Michael Rosenthal is co-editor of RingTV.com.

What It Means If Ortiz Wins

By Don Stradley

Hollywood is always hoping for that surprise hit to come along and create a flow of money for the other new releases. Sometimes it comes from an unlikely place, say, a movie about a big, fat Greek wedding or the recent series where the giant robot toys pound the hell out of each other. Those movies get people coming to the theaters, and every movie in the local Cineplex benefits from the spillover.

Boxing is the same way. A big fight creates a flurry of interest. The buzz lingers for weeks, especially if the result is unexpected. Especially if someone like Victor Ortiz beats someone like Floyd Mayweather.

The sense that anything can happen in boxing has been missing lately. Sure, there have been some upsets in fights that are off the radar, but the big ones have been playing out more or less as we imagine they will. With the exception of Sergio Martinez' shocking knockout of Paul Williams last year, big-time boxing has not exactly been the theater of the unexpected. Fans have enough to be disgruntled about, from the dreary heavyweight class to the bogus alphabet belts that seem to multiply as we sleep, not to mention the large number of heavily promoted bouts that have turned out to be duds this year. An Ortiz win would be like an automatic reset button, making us forget, momentarily, the

FRESH FACE
A victory over Mayweather could conceivably make Ortiz the new Mexican-American superstar.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

problems within the sport. Upsets can do that. Fresh young fighters who throw a lot of punches can do that.

Ortiz impressed many hard-core fans earlier this year with his gutsy win over Andre Berto. A win over Mayweather would widen his fanbase to an extreme he might not even comprehend at the moment.

There are three basic types of fans. There are the hard-core types who follow a particular fighter simply because they like him, those who follow a fighter because of his ethnic background, and those casual fans that simply follow him because he's famous. If Ortiz wins, he gets all three types of fans in the palm of his hand, starting with Mexican-Americans. The last Mexican-American who tried to beat Mayweather was Oscar De La Hoya. He failed. Can you imagine the scene if Ortiz uses his youth, speed, and southpaw style to emerge victorious over Mayweather? Mexican-American fans would treat Ortiz like a superstar of near Oscar-like proportion. Meanwhile, those who have always liked Ortiz because he's a hard-hitting lefty will have the satisfaction saying, "Told ya so." And those mainstream fans who only know the names of a handful of fighters will suddenly add Ortiz to their list of fighters they have to watch.

Of course, just because you beat a star doesn't mean you become a star, but Ortiz has some of the key ingredients that would make true stardom possible, namely a brash personality and an exciting, all-action style. That he occasionally gets dropped adds to the allure.

By fighting Mayweather in the first place, Ortiz may attract some of those fans who are currently on the fence regarding Manny Pacquiao. "Pac-Man" has alienated some customers this year with his choice of opponents. Rightly or wrongly, a small portion of fans see Pacquiao as coasting. Those fans searching for a new fighter to follow may jump right onto the Ortiz bandwagon.

Because of this potential growth in popularity, Ortiz could be a game changer for HBO. The young hopefuls currently being trotted out on *Boxing After Dark* aren't the most electrifying bunch. The network's greatest "discovery" of late is Martinez, and he's no youngster. Ortiz is young enough that HBO could turn him into a long-term project. He has an interesting backstory, the sort that HBO segment producers like to milk. Besides, fans tend to latch onto a fighter when he's as young as Ortiz.

An Ortiz victory could also mean we can say goodnight and farewell to the long-stalled Mayweather-Pacquiao bout. We suspect Mayweather will be a bit like Roy Jones—once the undefeated streak goes, so goes his mystique. Of course, Mayweather-Pacquiao could still happen—fights have a way of happening if there's enough money to be made—but it will never have the same excitement around it if Ortiz cracks the Mayweather code first. Considering that Mayweather fights infrequently, we don't know if he'll get right back in the ring with Ortiz for a rematch or spend another year and a half on the shelf.

FAN FRIENDLY
Ortiz goes for the gusto against Berto.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

While Mayweather licks his wounds, we could possibly gear up for a war between Ortiz and Pacquiao. The prospect of two agile southpaws with knockout power pitted against each other is so tempting we almost wish we could skip Mayweather-Ortiz and get right to the southpaw slugfest. Not to worry, because the likely result if Ortiz beats Mayweather is Ortiz-Pacquiao. A victory over Mayweather moves Ortiz into the elite circle of big-money events. He will not have to fight the likes of Berto soon or anyone else in that price range. He'll be in a position to simply chase the money, whether it's a rematch with Mayweather or a bout with Pacquiao.

Unfortunately, the other 147-pounders who aren't named Pacquiao or Mayweather aren't likely to benefit from Ortiz' good fortune. Most are from far off lands and not likely to sell tickets in Las Vegas. It's unlikely that Ortiz or the brains at Golden Boy will set a goal of dominating the division. The welterweight class will just have to battle amongst itself. If the last man standing is lucky, he might earn a shot at Ortiz in 2013.

Of course, fighters from 140 to 154 will start calling Ortiz out. Amir Khan, Timothy Bradley, maybe even Saul Alvarez, will be on the hunt for the man who beat Mayweather. Someone with a major interest in an Ortiz victory will be Marcos Maidana. The heavy-handed, unpolished Maidana made a name for himself by beating Ortiz two years ago. Ortiz has since made a case for himself, and a win over Mayweather would take Ortiz into the highest echelon of the sport. Maidana would benefit in a sort of trickle down effect. Since beating Ortiz, Maidana has been sketchy, losing a close bout to Khan and then struggling with an aging Erik Morales. As Maidana's limitations become clearer, his handlers should push hard for an Ortiz rematch while the money is there.

The Maidana issue brings to mind that Ortiz may always have a few critics he can't impress. Many have chosen not to forget his past tendencies to fade in fights, and his loss to Maidana still sticks in one's memory. Ortiz may always be regarded as just an attempt by Golden Boy Promotions to find a young Mexican-American to ape the glory days of De La Hoya. Of course, beating Mayweather will shrink the number of critics, but some will say the distractions of Mayweather's personal life finally caught up to him or that he was ripe for a loss due to his inactivity.

The critics would have valid points, but, even if Ortiz beats Mayweather and then loses four in a row, he'll always be remembered as the fighter who put a dent in Mayweather's perfect record. Besides, the mewling noises of a few critics won't even be heard next to the uproar created by an Ortiz victory. An Ortiz victory just might knock the entire boxing world off its axis. ■

Don Stradley is an award-winning freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

What It Means If Mayweather Wins

By Don Stradley

There has been talk, even from Manny Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach, that Floyd Mayweather is using Victor Ortiz as preparation for Pacquiao. The thinking goes that Ortiz, like Pacquiao, is a lefty, and Mayweather will use him as a kind of crash test dummy.

During the weeks leading up to the Ortiz bout, Mayweather seemed to soften his stance in regards to fighting Pacquiao. He made the fan-friendly announcement that, "Manny is next. That's what the fans want." To some, this sounded promising. To us, it sounded like lip service to create interest in the Ortiz bout and to put boxing fans in a properly optimistic frame of mind. Until anything is signed, though, the Pacquiao-Mayweather bout is still firmly in the wishful thinking phase. In our estimation, a win over Ortiz doesn't necessarily mean Mayweather finally agrees to fight Pacquiao. If it were that easy, it would have happened already.

It's unfortunate that the shadow of Pacquiao hangs over everything Mayweather does, for Ortiz is a capable young fighter who deserves attention. He's bound to push Mayweather in ways we haven't seen in a while, and Mayweather may have to dig a little deeper than usual to ride out the rough moments. There has been scuttlebutt that Mayweather doesn't like southpaws. A win over Ortiz will go a long way towards refuting that theory.

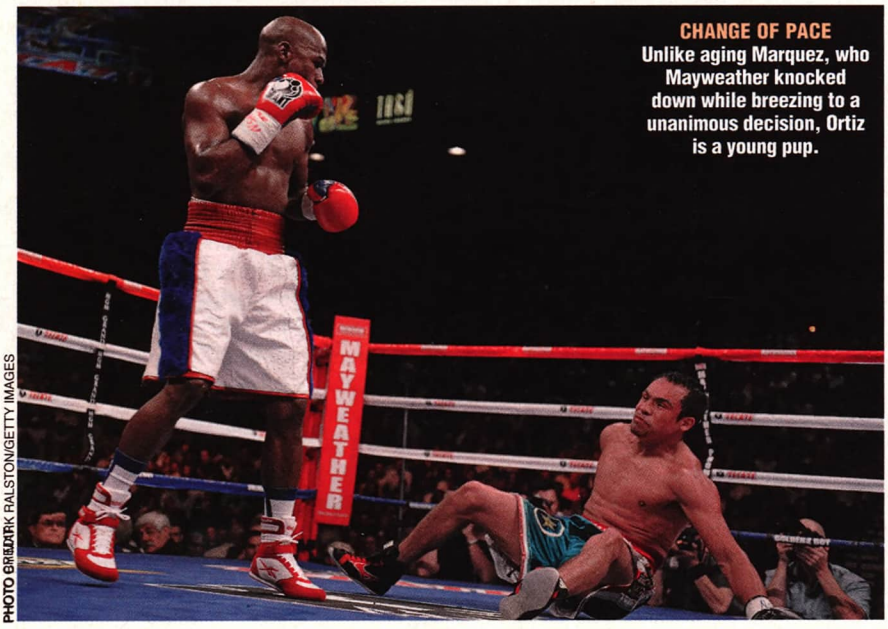
The theory we'd rather see Mayweather challenge is the one that has to do with him losing his taste for boxing. He's been at it a long time, since he was a child. Boxing is the family business. His self-destructive behavior outside the ring, his search for accolades in other venues, and the low number of fights he's had in recent years point to a man who wants out. This is a shame because, in a strange way, he's been good for boxing. We probably won't remember his fights, but we'll remember him.

On the surface, a win over Ortiz may not seem significant. Compared to Mayweather, Ortiz is a callow pup. But that's exactly the intrigue behind the bout—it's the first time in a long while that Mayweather has fought someone so much younger than himself.

Since his return from a two-year "retirement," Mayweather has fought Juan Manuel Marquez and Shane Mosley, two accomplished but aging challengers. During the two years prior to his sabbatical, Mayweather fought a group of fighters on the verge of becoming geezers, such as Oscar De La Hoya, Arturo Gatti, Sharmba Mitchell, and Carlos Baldomir. Only Zab Judah and Ricky Hatton could be considered in their primes when they fought Mayweather, and one could make the argument that even those two were slightly past their peaks. In Ortiz, Mayweather will be dealing with a young firebrand, a fighter who has yet to experience the creeks and limitations of age. Training and fighting is still fun for Ortiz. He has tasted some success, and he wants more. To beat such a hungry fighter will be an achievement, especially since Mayweather sometimes acts as if boxing is the last thing he wants to do these days.

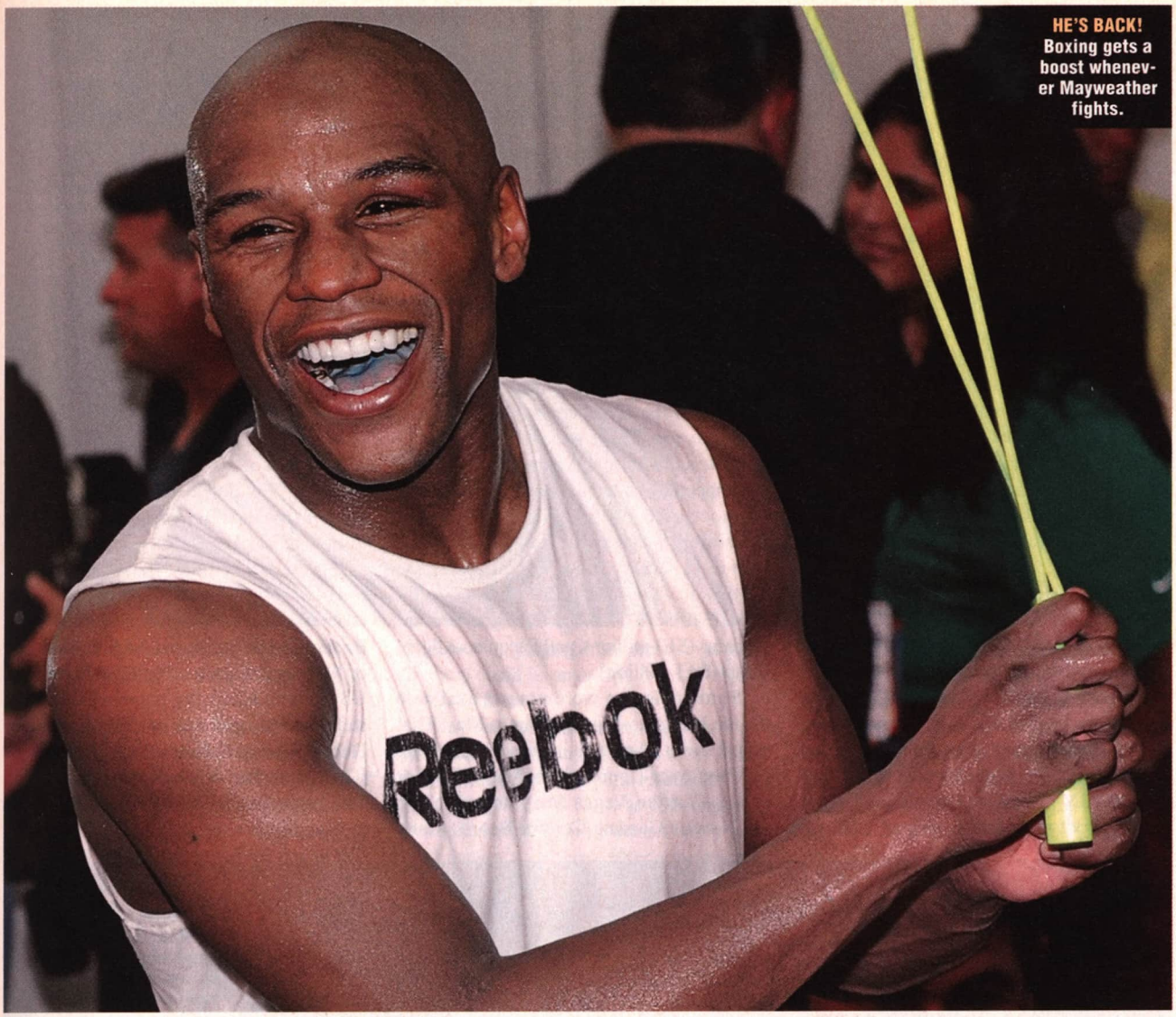
Ortiz is also the bigger man. When the fighters held their fists together for a press conference photo op, Mayweather's hand looked dainty, while Ortiz' meat hook looked like something you'd whack burglars with from behind a door. Granted, hand size is hardly a reliable gauge for who wins a fight, but, when it comes down to bone structure, Ortiz is simply a bigger fellow. He started his career at 140 and is still growing. Mayweather, when you think about it, is an old junior lightweight.

If Mayweather can use his skills to beat the younger and larger Ortiz, this fight will undoubtedly have a positive effect on Mayweather's reputation and legacy. He'll show that not even a bigger fighter filled with the cockiness of raw youth can break through his defense. The mark of a great one is that he knocks off the old guys on his way up and whips on the younger guys who come after him. It was one thing for Muhammad Ali to beat up older guys like Sonny Liston and Archie Moore, but, when Ali aged and was still holding his ground against young studs like George Foreman, his greatness was confirmed. Bernard Hopkins, already on his way to Canastota, has added to his legacy by whipping on younger men. Granted, Mayweather may always be looked upon as a



CHANGE OF PACE
Unlike aging Marquez, who Mayweather knocked down while breezing to a unanimous decision, Ortiz is a young pup.

PHOTO BY MARK RALSTON/GETTY IMAGES



HE'S BACK! Boxing gets a boost whenever Mayweather fights.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

fighter who frittered away his best years, but a convincing win over Ortiz may temporarily stanch the flow of bad feelings from Mayweather's critics.

We don't know which party is larger, those who admire Mayweather or those who would rather eat rat poison than spend money to watch him fight. For Mayweather's fans, even a dull win will be treated as proof of Mayweather's brilliance, but his critics won't see a win over Ortiz as anything special. We can hear them now, grousing that Mayweather handpicked an easy, inexperienced opponent. They'll dismiss Ortiz as a one-dimensional young guy who walks into punches and has never been part of such a major event. They could add that Ortiz was at a personal best against Andre Berto, and there was no way he could put in consecutive great performances.

Of course, Mayweather could impress his critics if he emerges victorious in a great fight. But it would have to be a Barrera-Morales type of alley fight, and that's unlikely. Mayweather's style simply doesn't allow for "great" fights. It's sad to say, but nothing short of a dominating knockout of Ortiz will impress Mayweather's critics. That's the grave he has dug for himself. Not that he cares.

While a win by Ortiz would shake things up, a Mayweather win might do nothing more than maintain the status quo. This means he is still undefeated, still dealing with his legal problems, and still not fighting a certain Filipino congressman. If Mayweather wins, chances are he goes back into his bubble and doesn't come out again for many months. The welterweights? Forget it. It's not as if Floyd will beat Ortiz and then ask for the head of Vyacheslav Senchenko.

As for Mayweather's place in the pound-for-pound ranking, a win over Ortiz would reinstate him (Mayweather was dropped from both THE RING's P-4-P and divisional rankings due to inactivity), but where would depend on how Pacquiao does against Marquez in their upcoming bout. If Mayweather blows Ortiz out while Pacquiao looks bad or loses to Marquez, Mayweather could replace Pacquiao at the top spot. But if Mayweather simply wins a routine decision, and Pacquiao wins his bout, Pacquiao will probably remain at number one. And in all likelihood, that's what will happen. If Mayweather wins, it will be in his usual careful manner. He is not going to turn into Sugar Ray Robinson overnight. He is what he is. Like we said: status quo.

Mayweather remains an anomaly. He does everything wrong—he fights cautiously, he fights infrequently, and he hasn't given fans the fight they have wanted for years. Yet, he maintains a high profile and has amassed some enormous paydays. Any other fighter with the same faults would've been written off years ago. Not Mayweather. A win over Ortiz keeps his unlikely career going a little while longer. ■

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Mayweather-Ortiz To Create Financial Uptick

By Don Stewart

The Nevada desert will be alive with an energy that is unique to big-fight weekends in Las Vegas. The casinos and their sports books will be buzzing. Hotels will be booked and restaurants filled. Bars and strip clubs will be overrun. Taxicabs will be tough to grab.

"A big fight night in Las Vegas is such an exciting time to be here, even for the casual boxing fan," said Jay Rood, Race & Sports Book Director for MGM Resorts International. "The electricity in the air, wagering on your fighter, and celebrity sightings offer an appeal to almost anyone."

For some fans, Floyd Mayweather-Victor Ortiz is just another overly hyped event that will probably result in a one-sided finish, just another detour on the road to a Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao superfight. But to the city of Las Vegas, the September 17 showdown at the MGM Grand will be like a 5-Hour Energy shot for a sluggish economy.

Boxing's impact on Vegas is significant, particularly on weekends when Mayweather or Pacquiao are at work. The Mayweather-Shane Mosley bout in May 2010 added an estimated $8.3-million in non-gaming revenue to the city's economy, according to figures provided by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. That total was topped by other big bouts in the city that have occurred since the start of the Great Recession, including Mayweather-Ricky Hatton ($12.5-million), Pacquiao-Hatton ($10.7-million), Pacquiao-Oscar De La Hoya ($10.5-million), Joe Calzaghe-Bernard Hopkins ($10-million), and Pacquiao-Miguel Cotto ($9.1-million).

Similar figures were not yet available for the Pacquiao-Mosley bout in May. That month saw a 29-percent increase in gambling revenue over figures from May 2010 for casinos on the Vegas Strip according to the Nevada Gaming Control Board. Many sources credited the uptick, at least partially, to Pacquiao-Mosley.

"Las Vegas has been the home of marquee boxing matches for decades, and we continue to host the biggest title fights," said Jeremy Handel, a spokesperson for the Convention and Visitors Authority. "Boxing has been a great part of our mix of special events—including NASCAR, the National Finals Rodeo, and more—that have continued to attract visitors to Las Vegas."

Still, few US cities, if any, have felt the recession's sting quite as deeply as Vegas. A study released in December 2010 by the Brookings Institution and the London School of Economics ranked Sin City first among US cities hit hardest by the recession. Vegas' suffering was rated fifth worldwide, with only Dublin, Dubai, Barcelona, and Thessaloniki (Greece) faring worse. Ranked the world's 14th best economy from 1993 to 2007, Vegas took a nosedive to 128th in 2008. The city's

SIN CITY SIGN
Las Vegas has been hit hard by the economic recession, but a big fight such as Mayweather-Ortiz is expected to give the gaming oasis a much-needed boost.

PHOTO CREDIT: IAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

GILDING THE LION
Mayweather poses next to the MGM Grand lion prior to his fight with Juan Manuel Marquez. Even though the fight wasn't as successful as other Mayweather bouts, it still generated a live gate of more than $8-million.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIREIMAGES

employment rate dropped three percent and income levels fell 1.2 percent from 2009 to 2010.

So the big bucks that big fights bring to Vegas are especially crucial during this period of economic recovery. "When either of those two [Mayweather or Pacquiao] are involved in a fight, there is an excitement in the air just like the days when Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns, and even Mike Tyson in his heyday fought," Rood said. "Unfortunately, at this time, Mayweather and Pacquiao are the only two who can really produce that energy of the past. Hopefully, we'll get more fighters of their magnitude."

Pacquiao fights tend to carry more of an economic punch due to the large number of Filipino fans "Pac-Man" attracts. Mayweather has his fans as well, but his most successful bouts, economically, have often had more to do with his opponent. For example, his December 2007 clash with Hatton, which occurred near the official start of the recession, brought thousands of British fight fanatics to Vegas. Those fans had plenty of money to spend due to the strength of the British pound versus the US dollar at the time.

Given the size and spending power of their respective fan bases, it's unlikely that Mayweather-Ortiz will break box office records. Any bout involving Mayweather is big business, though, especially with help from an HBO *24/7* series and the Golden Boy Promotions marketing machine. Golden Boy would not offer any estimates on what kind of numbers Mayweather-Ortiz is expected to produce, but, judging from recent events, the live gate could be anywhere from $7-million to $10-million.

Mayweather's last bout, which was also against an American (Mosley), drew 14,038 fans to the MGM Grand and resulted in a live gate of $11,032,100 that was 10th highest in Nevada history. There were probably more similarities to Mayweather's September 2009 meeting with Juan Manuel Marquez, given that Mayweather was ending a long layoff and was facing a Mexican opponent (Ortiz is Mexican-American). That event attracted 13,116 to the MGM Grand, with a disappointing but still meaningful live gate of $6,811,300.

Most recently, Pacquiao-Mosley resulted in 15,422 tickets sold and a live gate of $8,882,600 that is 14th highest in Nevada history. Pacquiao-Cotto drew similar numbers in November 2009, with 15,930 tickets sold and a live gate of $8,847,550. Both of those bouts were also held at the MGM Grand.

So what does it all mean for Vegas? Judging from a random sampling of calls made to Vegas restaurants, the MGM Grand is the epicenter in terms of economic impact. The ripples are felt throughout the city but less so the farther one gets from the MGM Grand. For example, a manager at Il Mulino New York (Caesar's Palace) rated the effect at a three on a scale of one to 10. Though located west of the Strip, Alizé reported higher activity, at least on the Friday before a big fight. Il Fornaio, near the MGM Grand at New York New York, receives much more of a direct impact from big fights.

Of course, the biggest punch comes at the casinos. The overall drop at the sports books, tables, and slots easily covers the site fee casinos pay to host boxing events, which is the reason fights are so often held at casinos in the first place. Scott Ghertner, director of public relations for MGM Resorts International, could not disclose actual numbers due to corporate policy. However, Rood said a Mayweather or Pacquiao fight generally produces twice the handle of a pro football game.

"Pacquiao has a huge Filipino following, with a lot of money coming out from the Philippines to watch and support him," Rood said. "Anytime he fights, the handle is very good. That was the case in the Pacquiao-Mosley fight. The handle was probably about 20 to 30 percent more than I anticipate for the Mayweather-Ortiz fight."

MGM Resorts set an opening line at Mayweather -$750 and Ortiz +$500 (Mayweather is a 7.5-to-1 favorite). As of mid-July, Rood said the number of wagers on Ortiz favored those on Mayweather by roughly 20 to 1, which is a common occurrence. Most experienced bettors planning to bet the favorite wait until closer to the fight, when a rush of late money on the underdog brings the favorite's price down. Some of those bets will be quite substantial. "On a fight such as this," Rood said, "we will take multiple five-figure bets and probably at least a couple of six-figure bets."

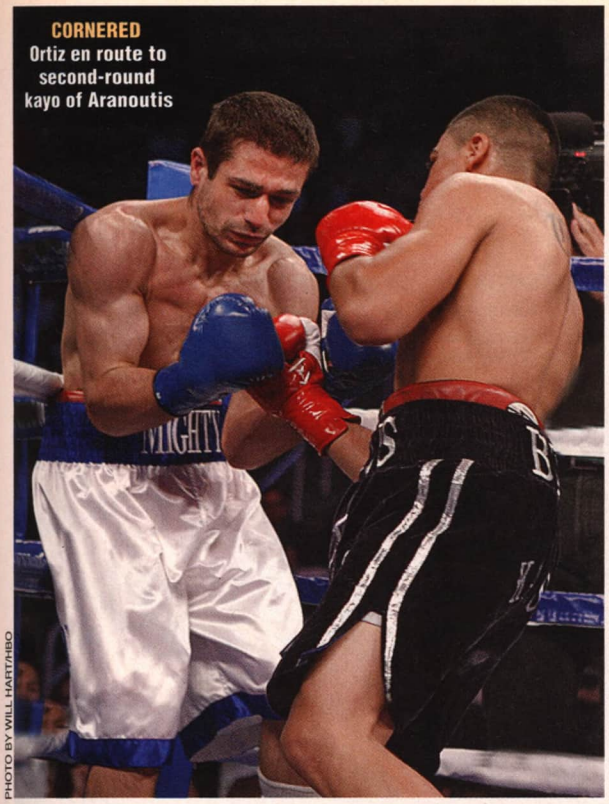
There will be winners and losers, both inside and outside of the ring. But with Mayweather-Ortiz injecting badly needed cash into the Vegas economy, the biggest winner, as always, will be the house. ■

The Professional Record Of VICTOR ORTIZ

2004		
Jun 4	Raul Montes, Las Vegas, NV	KO 1
July 24	Alejandro Nungaray, Laughlin, NV	W 4
Sept. 17	Lee De Leon, Las Vegas	KO 2
Oct. 8	Charles Hawkins, Laughlin	KO 4
Nov. 26	Juan Patino, Las Vegas	W 4
2005		
Feb. 11	Joel Ortega, San Diego, CA	KO 1
March 5	Rodney Jones, Las Vegas	KO 2
June 3	Corey Alarcon, Oxnard, CA	Disq. L 1
Aug. 26	Oliver Bolanos, Houston, TX	W 4
Sept. 9	Kevin Carmody, Laughlin	W 6
Nov. 4	Donnell Logan, Ventura, CA	KO 2
2006		
Jan. 6	Leroy Fountain, Bernalillo, NM	KO 4
Feb. 10	Nestor Rosas, San Antonio, TX	KO 5
March 31	Freddie Barrera, Maywood, CA	KO 1
June 23	Orlando Cantera, Nogales, AZ	KO 4
Sept. 8	Alfred Kotey, Dallas, TX	W 8
Nov. 3	Yahir Aguiar, Nogales	KO 2
2007		
Jan. 19	Marvin Cordova Jr., Phoenix, AZ	Tech. Draw 1
April 14	Tomas Barrientes, San Antonio	KO 5
June 29	Maximino Cuevas, Camp Verde, AZ	KO 1
Aug. 30	Emmanuel Clottey, Houston	KO 10
Nov. 10	Carlos Maussa, New York, NY	KO 1
2008		
May 3	Dairo Esalas, Carson, CA	KO 5
Sept. 13	Roberto Arrieta, Las Vegas, CA	KO 5
Dec. 6	Jeffrey Resto, Las Vegas	KO 2
2009		
March 7	Mike Arnaoutis, San Jose, CA	KO 2
June 27	Marcos Maidana, Los Angeles, CA	KO by 6
Dec. 12	Antonio Diaz, Chicago, IL	KO 7
2010		
Feb. 25	Hector Alatorre, Los Angeles	KO 10
May 15	Nate Campbell, New York	W 10
Sept. 18	Vivian Harris, Los Angeles	KO 3
Dec. 11	Lamont Peterson, Las Vegas	D 10
2011		
April 16	Andre Berto, Mashantucket, CT *(Wins WBC Welterweight Title)*	W 12

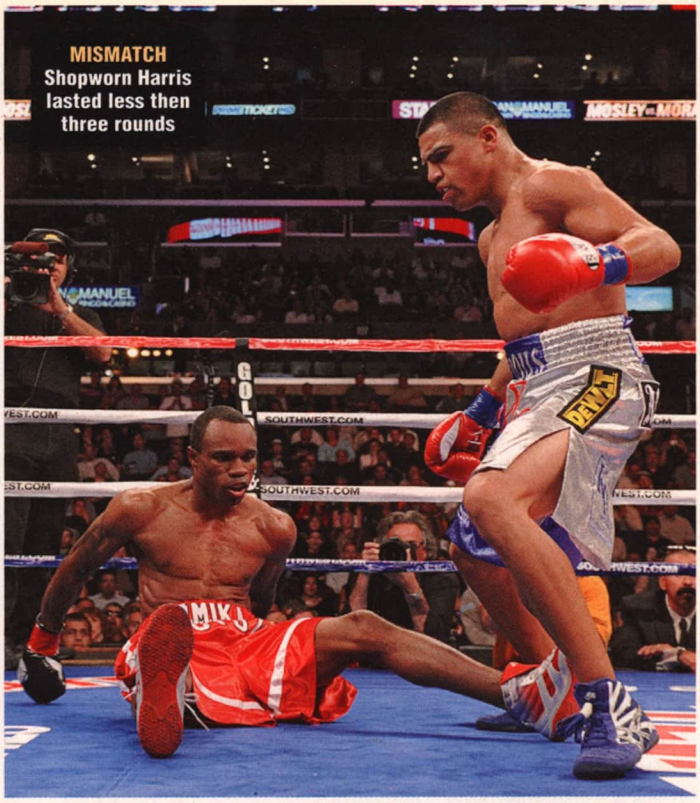
SOUTHPAW JAB
Arrieta samples Ortiz' straight right

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS



CORNERED
Ortiz en route to second-round kayo of Aranoutis

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO



MISMATCH
Shopworn Harris lasted less then three rounds

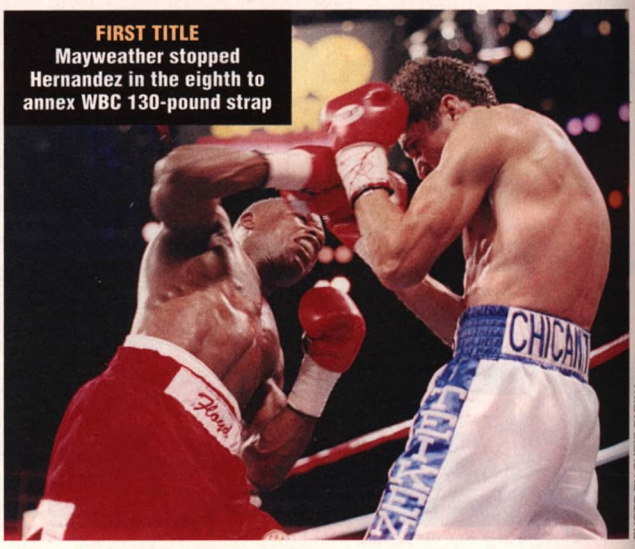
PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

BERTO BLASTED
Ortiz came off the floor to beat previously undefeated Berto

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

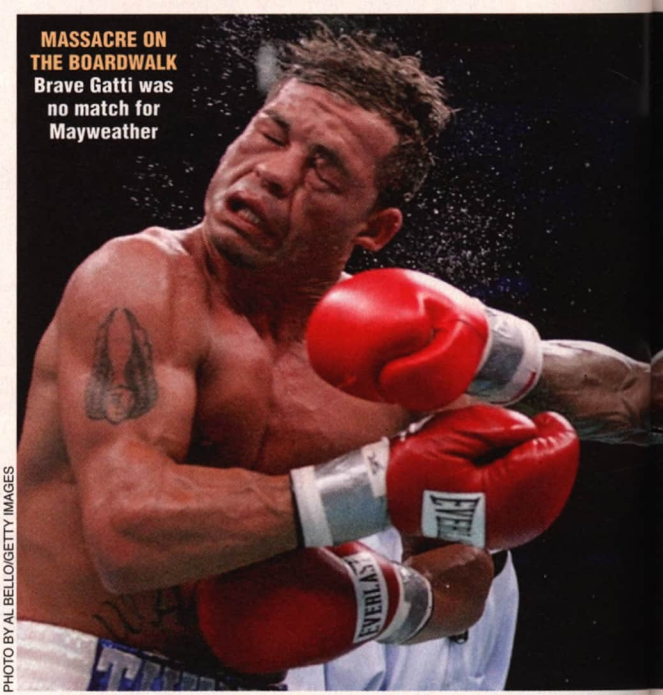
The Professional Record Of
FLOYD MAYWEATHER

1996		
Oct. 11	Robert Apodaca, Las Vegas, NV	KO 2
Nov. 30	Reggie Sanders, Albuquerque, NM	W 4
1997		
Jan. 18	Jerry Cooper, Las Vegas	KO 1
Jan. 31	Edgar Ayala, Chula Vista, CA	KO 2
March 12	Kino Rodriguez, Grand Rapids, MI	KO 1
April 12	Bobby Geipert, Las Vegas	KO 1
May 9	Tony Duran, Las Vegas	KO 1
June 14	Larry O'Shields, San Antonio, TX	W 6
July 12	Jesus Chavez, Biloxi, MS	KO 4
Sept. 6	Luis Leija, El Paso, TX	KO 2
Oct. 14	Felipe Garcia, Boise, ID	KO 6
Nov. 20	Angelo Nunez, Los Angeles, CA	KO 3
1998		
Jan. 9	Hector Arroyo, Biloxi	KO 5
Feb. 28	Sam Girard, Atlantic City, NJ	KO 2
March 23	Miguel Melo, Ledyard, CT	KO 3
April 17	Gustavo Cuello, Los Angeles	W 10
June 14	Tony Pep, Atlantic City	W 10
Oct. 3	Genaro Hernandez, Las Vegas *(Wins WBC Super Featherweight Title)*	KO 8
Dec. 19	Angel Manfredy, Miami, FL *(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)*	KO 2
1999		
Feb. 17	Carlos Rios, Grand Rapids *(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)*	W 12
May 22	Justin Juuko, Las Vegas *(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)*	KO 9
Sept. 11	Carlos Gerena, Las Vegas *(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)*	KO 7
2000		
March 18	Goyo Vargas, Las Vegas *(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)*	W 12
Oct. 21	Emanuel Burton, Detroit *(Non-Title Bout)*	KO 9
2001		
Jan. 20	Diego Corrales, Las Vegas *(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)*	KO 10
May 26	Carlos Hernandez, Grand Rapids *(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)*	W 12
Nov. 10	Jesus Chavez, San Francisco, CA *(Retains WBC Super Featherweight Title)*	KO 9
2002		
April 20	Jose Luis Castillo, Las Vegas *(Wins Vacant World/WBC Lightweight Titles)*	W 12
Dec. 7	Jose Luis Castillo, Las Vegas *(Retains World/WBC Lightweight Titles)*	W 12
2003		
April 19	Victoriano Sosa, Fresno, CA *(Retains World/WBC Lightweight Titles)*	W 12



FIRST TITLE
Mayweather stopped Hernandez in the eighth to annex WBC 130-pound strap

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA



MASSACRE ON THE BOARDWALK
Brave Gatti was no match for Mayweather

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Nov. 1	Phillip N'dou, Grand Rapids *(Retains World/WBC Lightweight Titles)*	KO 7
2004		
May 22	DeMarcus Corley, Atlantic City	W 12
2005		
Jan. 22	Henry Bruseles, Miami	KO 8
June 25	Arturo Gatti, Atlantic City *(Wins WBC Junior Welterweight Title)*	KO 6
Nov. 19	Sharmba Mitchell, Portland, OR	KO 6

By The Numbers
VICTOR ORTIZ

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

0	Previous times Ortiz has fought in a pay-per-view main event
1	Divisions in which Ortiz has won major alphabet titles
2	Times Ortiz has been involved in bouts in which both fighters were knocked down twice
3	Points by which Ortiz led on all three scorecards when he was stopped by Marcos Maidana
4	Total titlists/champions Ortiz has defeated
6	Length, in months, of Ortiz' longest career layoff
8	Consecutive knockout wins Ortiz recorded prior to defeat to Maidana
32	Pro fights on Ortiz' record before he challenged for his first title
50	Percent of Ortiz' 22 career knockouts that came inside two rounds
66.67	Ortiz' career knockout percentage
145	Professional rounds boxed (4.39 per fight)
151	Powershots by which Ortiz outlanded Andre Berto, according to CompuBox
300	Dollars you could have won betting $100 on Ortiz to beat Berto
450	Dollars you can win betting $100 on Ortiz if he beats Mayweather
15,550	Twitter followers, as of July 11, 2011

By The Numbers
FLOYD MAYWEATHER

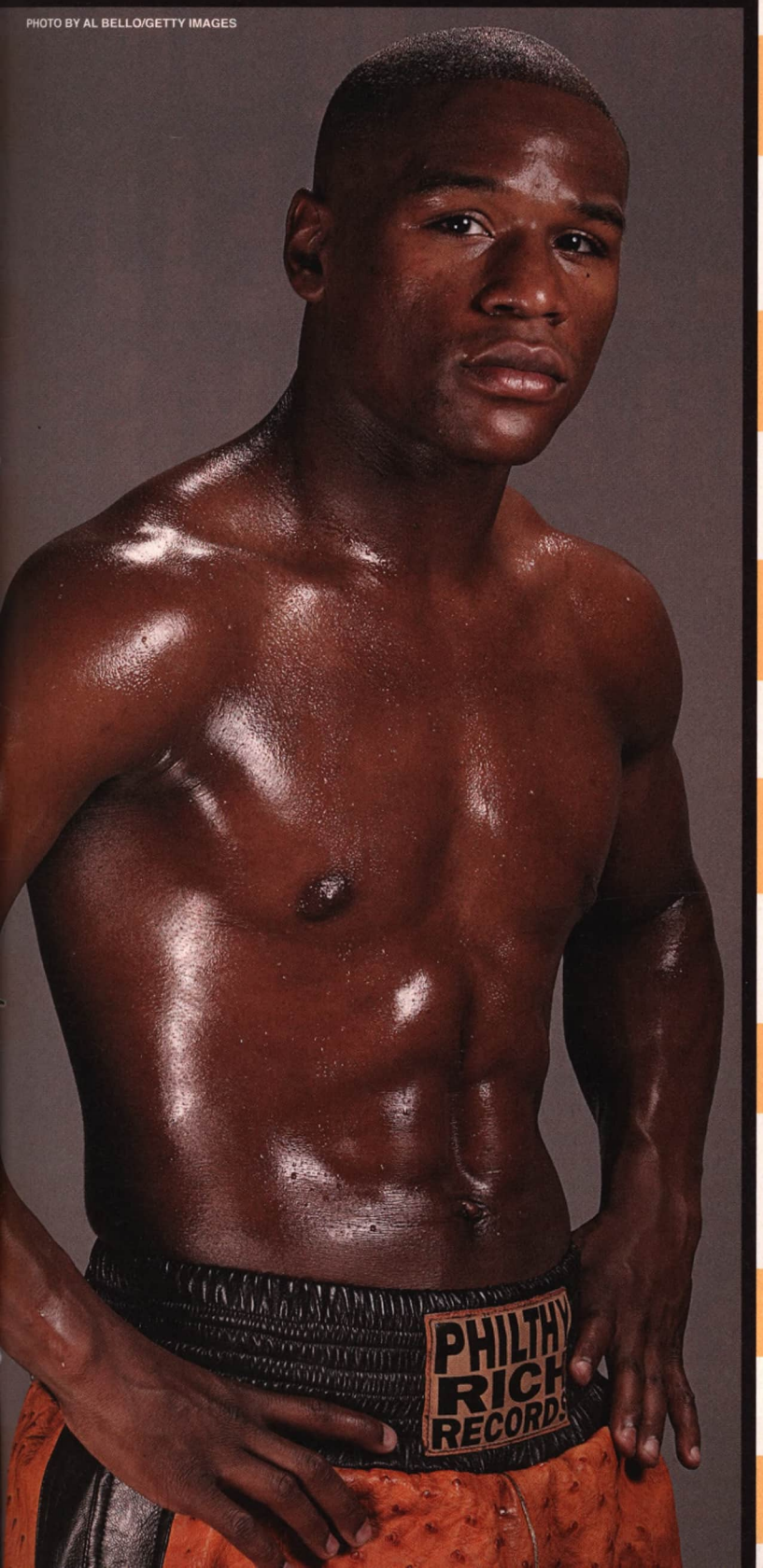


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

0	Losses Mayweather has suffered in his pro career
1	Official knockdowns Mayweather has suffered in his pro career
2	Times Mayweather has been named Fighter of the Year by THE RING
2	Fights Mayweather has engaged in during the past 45 months leading up to this fight
2.4	Pay-per-view buys, in millions, for those two fights combined
2.4	Pay-per-view buys, in millions, for Mayweather's fight with Oscar De La Hoya
5	Divisions in which Mayweather has won major alphabet titles
6	Fights Mayweather has had against southpaws
12	Years since Mayweather last ended a fight in five rounds or less
13	Total successful title defenses made by Mayweather
14	Total titlists/champions Mayweather has defeated
17	Pro fights on Mayweather's record before he challenged for his first title
60.98	Mayweather's career knockout percentage
299	Professional rounds boxed (7.29 per fight)
1,366,015	Twitter followers, as of July 11, 2011

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

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10 GREAT WELTERWEIGHT UPSETS

By Lee Groves

In the minds of most, Floyd Mayweather was deemed a heavy favorite against WBC welterweight titlist Victor Ortiz the instant the bout was announced. That's because we've seen nothing but excellence from the man named "Money." In going 41 for 41 in his 15-year career, he's demonstrated exquisite conditioning, lightning-quick speed, superlative delivery of every punch, a nearly impenetrable defense, supremely accurate power punching, and a highly evolved ring intelligence that only could've been procured from a lifetime of experiences.

He "retired" in 2007 as the unquestioned pound-for-pound king, but, even now, at age 34 and engaging in just his third fight in nearly four years, he remains one-half of boxing's Manning-versus-Brady debate. Those who believe Manny Pacquiao is the sport's best inch-for-inch and kilo-for-kilo campaigner point to his unworldly speed, his historic performances spread over eight weight classes, and his willingness to accept threatening challenges, while Mayweather's supporters simply point to Mayweather's unbeaten record.

One can only speculate what "Vicious Victor" must be thinking. After all, he's the defending titlist, and he won his belt in potential Fight of the Year fashion in April against Andre Berto. Despite suffering two knockdowns and losing a point for rabbit punching, Ortiz captured a well-received decision by decking Berto twice and showing the desire and grit many say he lacked in his TKO loss against Marcos Maidana in June 2009. While he didn't erase the memories of Maidana, Ortiz managed to supplement them with a fresher, more ferocious and—pardon the pun—more vicious vision. Although the victory raised his profile and vaulted him into this superfight, Ortiz will need to stain Mayweather's pristine record to fulfill the predictions of stardom.

But can Ortiz accomplish what would be a massive shocker or, as our colleague Jim Bagg would put it, the Stingray of Stingrays? In theory, yes, for he'll be the only person sanctioned to strike Mayweather at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas that night. Plus, he has the southpaw style, shocking one-punch power, and the unique inspiration that comes with attempting something many believe is beyond his 70-inch reach.

Ortiz can draw strength from the fact that many fighters in boxing's long history have achieved what he's attempting. In the welterweight division alone, there have been many instances where underdogs have forced the sporting public to reassess their thinking by producing earth-shaking surprises. Ten such fights are profiled here, proving that anything is possible in the squared circle.

FRITZIE ZIVIC W 15 HENRY ARMSTRONG
Madison Square Garden, New York, New York • October 4, 1940

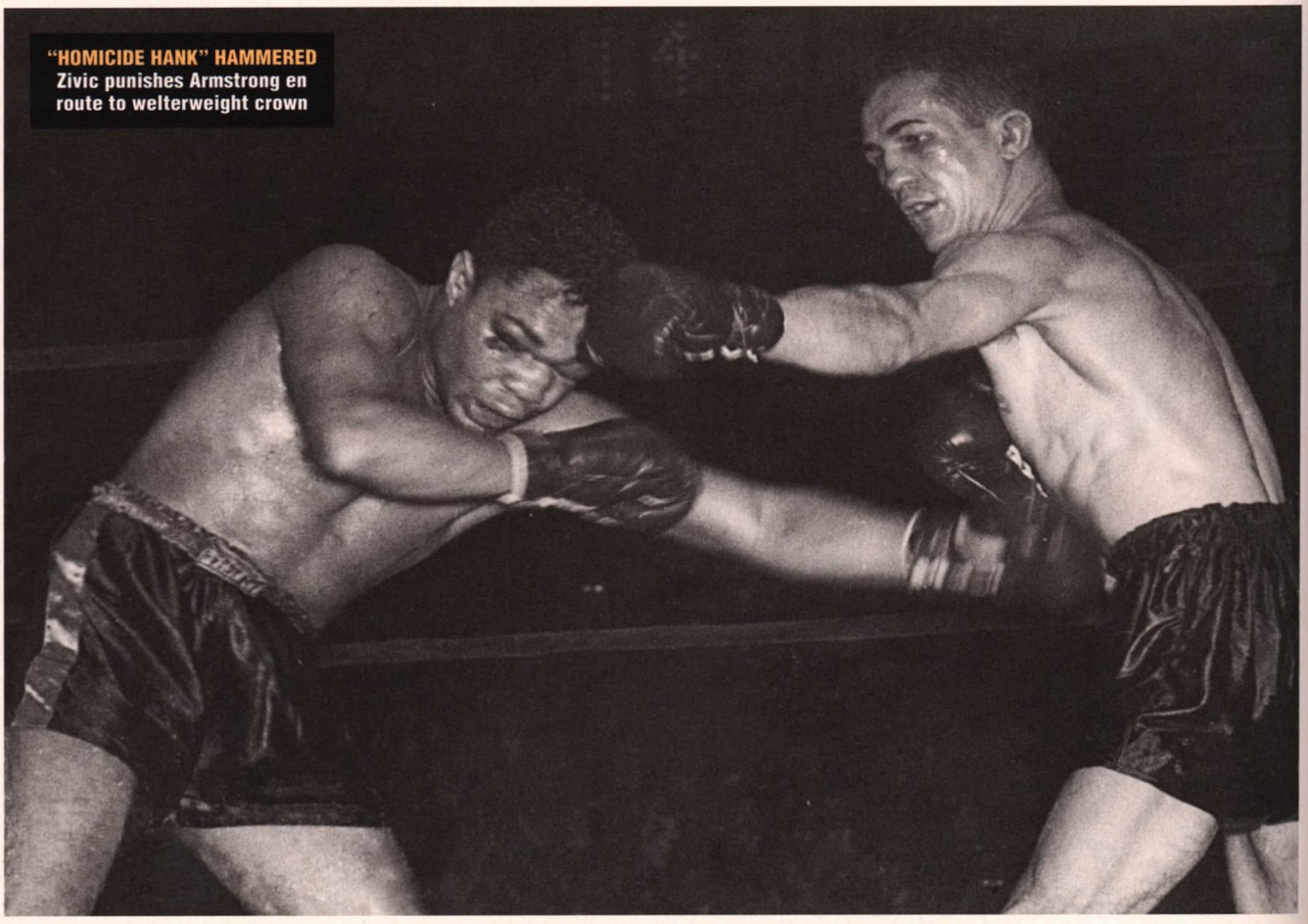
Setting the Stage: Since January 1, 1937, "Homicide Hank" was on a run unlike any other. He went 59-1-1 (51), scoring 27 straight knockouts at one point and seizing the undisputed featherweight, welterweight, and lightweight titles, the latter two in successive fights. While he relinquished the 126-pound belt and lost the 135-pound title to Lou Ambers, Armstrong was still a terror at 147 as he mowed down challengers with buzz-saw efficiency. From October 9 to October 30, 1939, he notched *five* defenses—four by knockout. Between his 18 defenses, he tried to annex the middleweight championship from previous victim Ceferino Garcia, and many thought Garcia was fortunate to keep his title via 10-round draw. The record was clear: Armstrong stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Joe Louis as the world's greatest boxer.

Meanwhile, Zivic was the rough-and-tumble product of his blue-collar Pittsburgh upbringing, where he learned early to take whatever he could get no matter the means. He used thumbs, butts, laces, chokeholds, elbows, and low blows to supplement his many legal punches. Yet he struggled early, losing eight straight decisions between August 1935 and April 1936, but, by the time he met Armstrong, his record was 100-24 (53), and he was fresh off a non-title decision victory over reigning lightweight champion Sammy Angott. Despite his six-fight win streak, Zivic was a 4-to-1 underdog because he was fighting his first 15-rounder against someone just as rugged but far more skilled and experienced at the elite level.

What Happened: Armstrong battered Zivic over the first five rounds, making sure to give the challenger plenty of his own medicine. "He beat me up more than the next 20 guys," Zivic told Peter Heller in *In This Corner*. "I got mad. He hit me low, choked me, gave me the elbow, and everything else."

Frustrated by referee Arthur Donovan's inaction, Zivic retaliated with gusto. In the sixth, Donovan looked at both men and said, "If you guys want to fight like this, it's okay with me." From then on, they tore into each other, and Zivic issued a horrific beating. He sliced and swelled Armstrong's eyes, forced him to swallow blood due to a lacerated lip, and slowed the "perpetual motion machine" to a crawl. With the fight even on two cards, Zivic scored a knockdown in the final moments, the bell ringing at the count of four.

The Aftermath: Zivic stopped Armstrong in 12 the following January but lost the belt to Freddie Cochrane in his next defense. Armstrong gained a measure of revenge by decisioning Zivic over 10 in October 1942. By then, neither was the same fighter as Zivic dropped 41 of his final 99 fights, and Armstrong, despite going 40-7- 2 (24), never again fought for a title.



"HOMICIDE HANK" HAMMERED
Zivic punishes Armstrong en route to welterweight crown

BILLY BACKUS KO 4 JOSE NAPOLES

War Memorial Auditorium, Syracuse, New York • December 3, 1970

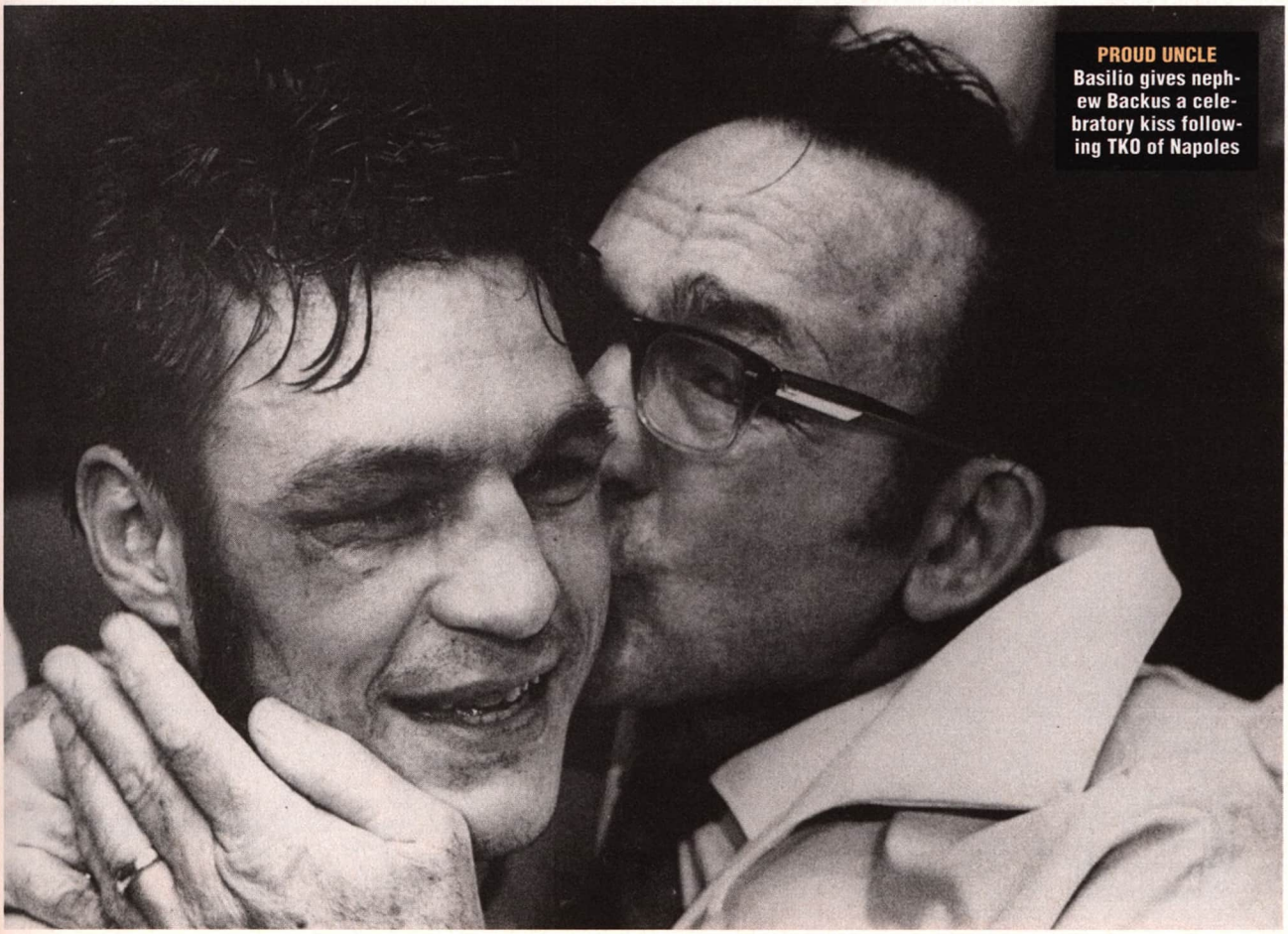
Setting the Stage: Napoles, nicknamed "Mantequilla" for being smooth as butter, was at his zenith physically and in terms of career path. He was in the midst of a career-best 20-fight winning streak that included a title-seizing victory over Curtis Cokes (KO 13), defenses against Cokes (KO 10), Emile Griffith (W 15), and Ernie Lopez (KO 15), and non-title encounters versus Edwin Mack (KO 3) and Pete Toro (KO 9). At 30, Napoles enjoyed the experience extracted from 69 fights (of which he'd won 65) but also the physical skills to exploit it.

Observers expected those skills to be in full flower against 9-to-1 outsider Backus, whose 32-10-4 (15) record didn't stir any talk of title changes. Like his uncle, Hall of Famer Carmen Basilio, Backus was a hardy left-hander who called Canastota, New York, home, but he didn't have Basilio's expertise. His first four years saw him build a mediocre 8-7-3 (4) record, but, following a two-year retirement, he found his ring legs and prevailed far more regularly. During one span, he won 15 of 16 and entered the Napoles bout with a modest 6-0-1 run and a number-10 ranking.

What Happened: Napoles easily won the first as his sharp punches penetrated Backus' guard. The fight irrevocably turned in the opening 15 seconds of round two when an accidental butt opened a gash over Napoles' left eye. Still, Napoles banged straight rights to the face with unerring regularity. Backus, however, hung tough and began landing hard blows from time to time.

With the cut worsening, Napoles abandoned his patient boxing in round three and started slugging with Backus, who eagerly accepted the invitation. One mid-round exchange had the locals leaping out of their seats and yelling themselves hoarse. While Napoles was more precise, he was losing the race against his own scar tissue, for both eyes now sported cuts. With Napoles constantly brushing away the blood in round four, referee Jack Milicich leaped between the combatants and hauled Napoles toward his seconds, who protested vociferously.

The Aftermath: Less than four months later, Napoles returned by stopping Manuel Gonzalez in six, while Backus posted non-title wins over Bobby Williams (W 12) and Robert Gallois (W 10). The rematch was held June 4, 1971, at the Forum in Inglewood, California. Backus tried his best, but Napoles' talent proved decisive. Two knockdowns in the eighth and a cut over the left eye sealed Backus' fate. Backus made three attempts to regain a title, losing two decisions to Hedgemon Lewis for the New York version and suffering a broken eye socket in bowing to Pipino Cuevas in round one. As for Napoles, dominance followed by another massive upset awaited.



PROUD UNCLE
Basilio gives nephew Backus a celebratory kiss following TKO of Napoles

JOHN H. STRACEY KO 6 JOSE NAPOLES

Monumental Plaza, Mexico City, Mexico • December 6, 1975

Setting the Stage: Since regaining the belt, Napoles fulfilled all prophecies of greatness by registering 10 defenses against the likes of Hedgemon Lewis (twice), Clyde Gray, Ernie Lopez, Roger Menetrey, and Haracio Saldano. By 1974, however, there were clear signs of decline. Middleweight king Carlos Monzon battered Napoles into a six-round TKO defeat in February 1974, and scandalously friendly officiating in Acapulco allowed Napoles to escape with his crown against Armando Muniz via 12-round technical decision in May 1975. But the 35-year-old Napoles turned back the clock in the rematch 3½ months later by scoring a decisive decision. The declarations of his demise appeared premature, so he entered the Stracey bout a big favorite.

But the environs weren't strange to the European welterweight champion. Stracey, 42-3-1 (35), fought twice in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, losing to eventual gold medalist Ronnie Harris. He's also sparred with Napoles as the champion prepared for Ralph Charles and learned he could land jabs. Finally, he acclimated to the 7,500-foot elevation by arriving a month beforehand. A victory over Menetrey in May 1974 earned him this opportunity, and the Englishman felt he was poised for greatness, even if few agreed.

What Happened: Both dealt with physical issues on fight day: Stracey with a tender left eye due to sparring and Napoles had to weigh in twice. Eager for an early ending, two Napoles hooks dumped Stracey for a five-count in round one. Stracey stuck to his blueprint, and it quickly paid dividends late in round two when Napoles emerged from a clinch with a nasty swelling above and below the left eye and a slice above the right orb.

Encouraged by Napoles' injuries, Stracey jabbed and crossed his right confidently in the third. Stracey even broke into a shuffle, and a sharp jab-hook combo shockingly decked Napoles moments later. The desperate champion fought an uncharacteristically messy fourth, but enough heavy punches got through that Stracey's left eye and nose leaked blood. Stracey again handled his crisis with aplomb, and his patience under fire was about to pay off.

Stracey's commanding jabs snapped back Napoles' head in the fifth and worsened the right eye. A stinging hook-cross combo caused the exhausted, blinded Napoles to wobble across the ring in the sixth, and 14 more unanswered punches persuaded referee Octavio Meyran to stop the slaughter.

The Aftermath: Stracey consolidated the Napoles win with a 10th round TKO of Lewis four months later, but Carlos Palomino scored an upset of his own in June 1976 by stopping Stracey in the 12th with a series of sickening bodyshots. Napoles never fought again but was among the charter inductees into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

END OF AN ERA Referee Meyran rescues Napoles from Stracey's onslaught

LLOYD HONEYGHAN KO 6 DONALD CURRY

Caesars Hotel and Casino, Atlantic City, New Jersey • September 27, 1986

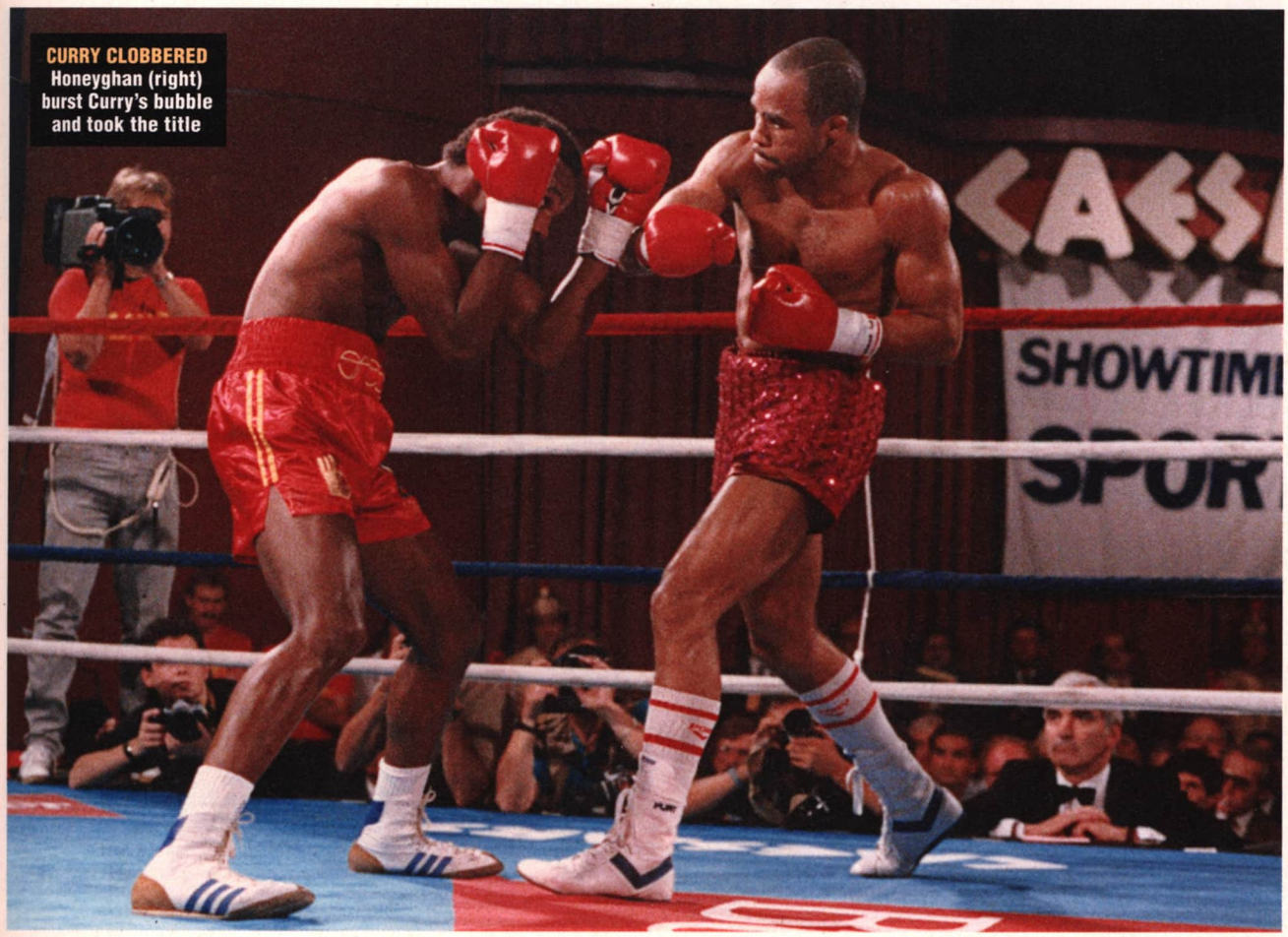
Setting the Stage: After blowing away WBC titleholder Milton McCrory in two rounds to unify the belts, Curry was being hailed as boxing's newest superstar and the logical successor to pound-for-pound king Marvelous Marvin Hagler. The "Lone Star Cobra's" path to Hagler was clear: Notch a few welterweight defenses, capture a junior middleweight title, and potentially take advantage of Hagler's twilight to become a triple champion and a transcendent figure.

Though beset by weight issues, Curry cleared the first hurdle by stopping mandatory challenger Eduardo Rodriguez in two. Next up was Honeyghan, the fiercely competitive "Ragamuffin Man" who boasted a 27-0 (17) mark, the British, European, and Commonwealth titles, plus a massive chip on his shoulder. Although unknown in the US, Honeyghan boasted excellent wins over Harold Brazier, Gianfranco Rosi, Roger Stafford, Horace Shufford, and Sylvester Mittee. The Mittee win, two fights earlier, made him the number-one challenger.

What Happened: Although both men weighed 146½, the differences in distribution were stark. One look at Curry's drawn face and skeletal physique told the world—and Honeyghan—that making 147 once again was a torturous process, while Honeyghan was fit and frothing. Honeyghan rocketed from his corner, staggered Curry in the second, and mashed his head and body at every opportunity. Curry bravely tried to fight back in the fifth, but it wasn't nearly enough against this hurricane. An accidental butt midway through the sixth opened an appalling gash over Curry's left eye, and the ringside physician stopped the fight between rounds six and seven, touching off a wild celebration in ring center and signaling the start of a most unlikely coronation.

The Aftermath: Due to the lengthy and comprehensive nature of the Honeyghan beating, Curry's pristine path toward immortality was shattered forever. The rest of his career was a series of fits and starts. A pair of butt-induced DQ wins led to a potentially redemptive fight against 154-pound titlist Mike McCallum, and, while he performed well early (staggering McCallum in the second), Curry fell victim to a one-punch kayo in the fifth. The momentum gained from dethroning Gianfranco Rosi at 154 was wiped out with an improbable loss to Rene Jacquot two fights later, and kayo defeats to Michael Nunn and Terry Norris sealed his place as a good but not great fighter.

Honeyghan reveled in his newfound status and created fans worldwide with victories over Johnny Bumphus, Maurice Blocker, and Gene Hatcher, the latter of which lasted a then-record 40 seconds. Honeyghan, who was becoming a fixture on US television, looked primed for a lengthy reign, but that all ended with an encounter that will be profiled later.



CURRY CLOBBERED Honeyghan (right) burst Curry's bubble and took the title

MARLON STARLING KO 11 MARK BRELAND

Township Auditorium, Columbia, South Carolina • August 22, 1987

BRELAND BOMBED Starling's left hook reduces Breland to a crumbled wreck

Setting the Stage: Arguably the greatest American amateur fighter ever, Breland cruised to an 18-0 (12) record amid hype that foresaw Ray Robinson-esque exploits. He took the first major step by stopping Harold Volbrecht to capture the vacant WBA strap two fights earlier, and, following a non-title win over Juan Rondon, he was ready for the next test—beating a veteran under championship conditions.

Starling seemed a fitting opponent, for while he was rated first across the board, he endured his share of stumbles. He lost a split decision to Donald Curry, dropped a 15-rounder in their rematch, and suffered upsets to Pedro Vilella and Johnny Bumphus. But he boasted wins against Jose Baret, Kevin Howard (twice), Tommy Ayers, Lupe Aquino, Floyd Mayweather Sr. (twice), Vilella, and Simon Brown. His experience, intelligence, defense, and defiance promised a rigorous trial by fire for Breland, who enjoyed a 7¼" height advantage.

What Happened: Breland began by snaking out jabs, but the usually defensive-minded challenger turned bully as he barreled inside behind looping punches and wrestled Breland to the canvas four times in the first six rounds, the latter of which drew a point penalty.

Starling's sturdy chin absorbed several hard rights in the second, and his defense blunted strong flurries in the third. But "Moochie" used physical and mental pressure as well as accurate punches to wear down the rail-thin champ. An overhand right nearly dropped Breland in the third, and, every time Breland landed well, Starling laughed, shrugged his shoulders, stuck out his tongue or yelled: "Come on!"

Though Breland built a commanding lead, Starling's tactics depleted his energy. Breland voluntarily flopped to the floor twice in the seventh and once in the eighth, and the fight became a grappling match in the ninth and 10th. A short right caused Breland to stumble toward his own corner early in the 11th, and a series of punches, capped by a crushing hook, left Breland in a crumpled heap for the 10 count.

The Aftermath: Although Starling comfortably outscored Fujio Ozaki, there were points when he struggled. He followed up with a dull draw against Breland in the rematch and lost the belt under bizarre circumstances that will be described later in the article. Starling regained his star by disassembling Honeyghan and Yung-Kil Chung but retired after losing decisions against Michael Nunn and Maurice Blocker.

Following the Starling draw, Breland experienced a brief revival. He won a vacant WBA belt a second time by stampeding Seung Soon Lee in one and scored four-straight title defense kayos. But Aaron Davis put an end to his run via ninth-round knockout and Breland never again vied for a title.

JORGE VACA TECH DEC. 8 LLOYD HONEYGHAN

Grand Hall, Wembley, London, United Kingdom • October 28, 1987

Setting the Stage: Honeyghan was back in the ring less than two months after destroying Gene Hatcher, a smart business decision given the star power he'd created from the Donald Curry, Johnny Bumphus, and Hatcher blowouts combined with his out-of-the-ring exploits. But the busy schedule took a toll, for he entered the bout with an injured right hand and his mind preoccupied by personal issues.

Still, he felt he could get by Vaca, who was a late sub for Bobby Joe Young. Vaca's 42-5-1 (25) record included a career-best 17-fight win streak that included Herman Montes and faded veterans Juan Escobar, Pipino Cuevas, and Saoul Mamby. For all his recent success, Vaca had two major flaws: Tender scar tissue and a questionable chin; every loss was by knockout. That he failed to make weight on the first try didn't help his chances either.

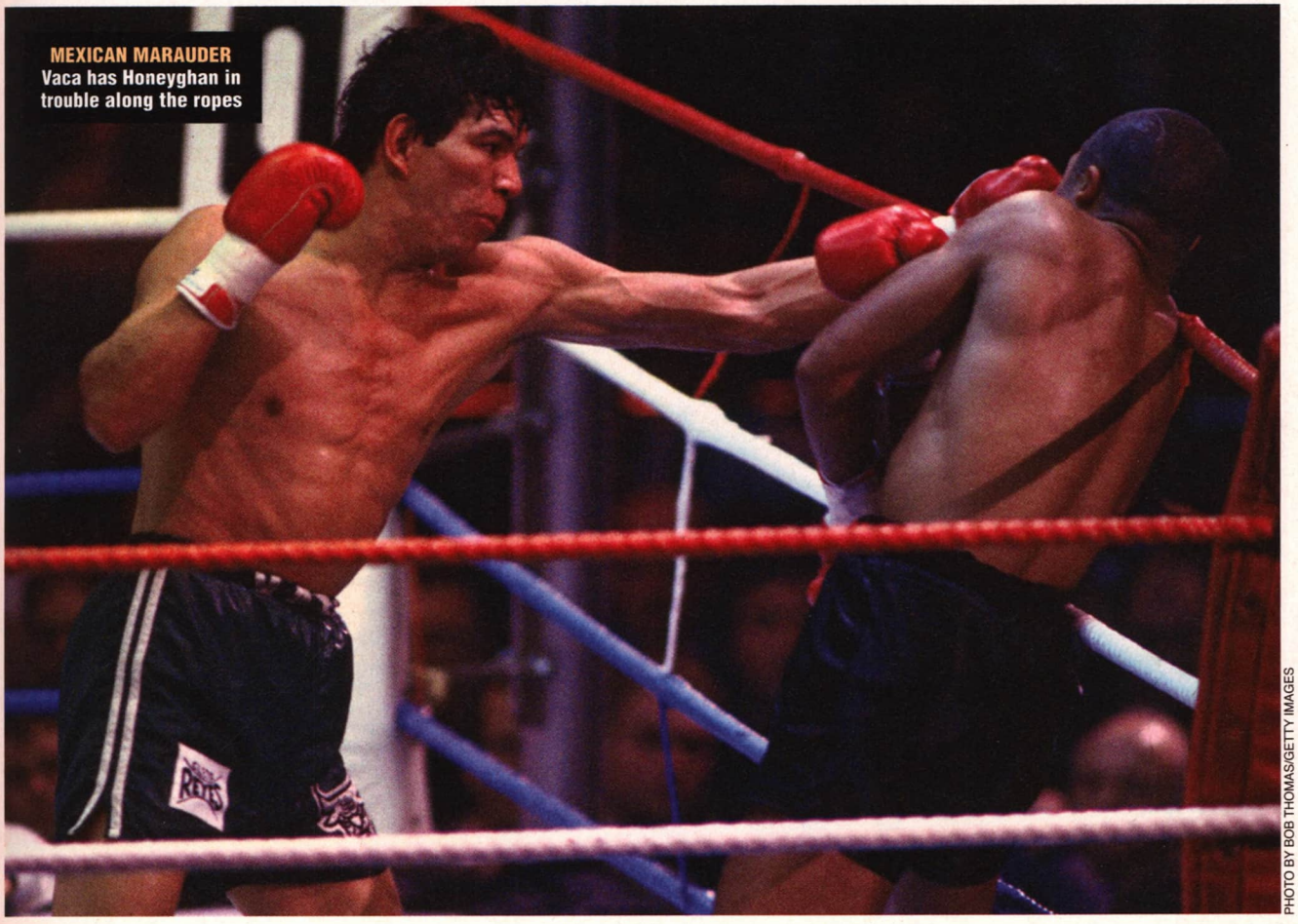
What Happened: The first three rounds were action-packed as Vaca swarmed Honeyghan with looping punches and the champion retaliated vigorously. An overhand right wobbled Vaca, but he quickly recovered and resumed his smothering attack. The challenger didn't care whether he landed or not; he just wanted to keep Honeyghan focusing on survival.

Honeyghan switched tactics in the fourth when he moved to long range and boxed from a southpaw stance, all the better to protect the injured right from full-strength punching. Interestingly, Vaca switched with him, and the two boxed with fair skill given the unfamiliar position. By the fifth, it was clear Honeyghan was in the toughest fight of his career to date as he bled from the nose and sported a cut under the right eye. Remarkably, Vaca's war-torn face was clean.

While Honeyghan was outboxing Vaca, the challenger's strength and persistence never waned. A surge late in the seventh appeared to sap Honeyghan, and Vaca was having one of his best rounds in the eighth when disaster struck. An accidental butt opened an ugly S-shaped cut over the Mexican's right eye, and the bout was stopped following a brief examination. Following a lengthy wait to add up the scorecards, the incredible announcement was made: Vaca had won a technical split nod and the WBC belt.

The Aftermath: A vengeful Honeyghan scorched Vaca in three to regain the title, but that was his last definitive performance. A foul-marred win over Yung-Kil Chung was followed by comprehensive losses to Marlon Starling and Mark Breland. Honeyghan fought for six more years but never again for a major title.

Less than four months after losing to Honeyghan, Vaca had his final title shot against IBF king Simon Brown, who starched him in three. In the following 14 years, he became a reliable trialhorse and retired at age 43 in 2002.



MEXICAN MARAUDER
Vaca has Honeyghan in trouble along the ropes

PHOTO BY BOB THOMAS/GETTY IMAGES

TOMAS MOLINARES NO-CONTEST 6 MARLON STARLING

Convention Hall, Atlantic City, New Jersey • July 29, 1988

Setting the Stage: "The Magic Man" struggled to find the form that led to his signature kayo over Breland 11 months earlier as he decisioned Ozaki and drew with Mark Breland in the rematch. Three-and-a-half months later, he met mandatory WBA challenger Molinares, a little known Colombian with a big punch (19 knockouts in an undefeated 22-fight career) and a stablemate of lightweight sensation Rafael Pineda, who stopped Juan Minaya in five on the undercard.

What Happened: On a card aptly named "Double Trouble," there was controversy galore. The co-feature saw Lloyd Honeyghan low-blow Yung-Kil Chung into a fifth-round TKO, and Molinares-Starling featured one of the most stupefying finishes this division—or any division—ever witnessed.

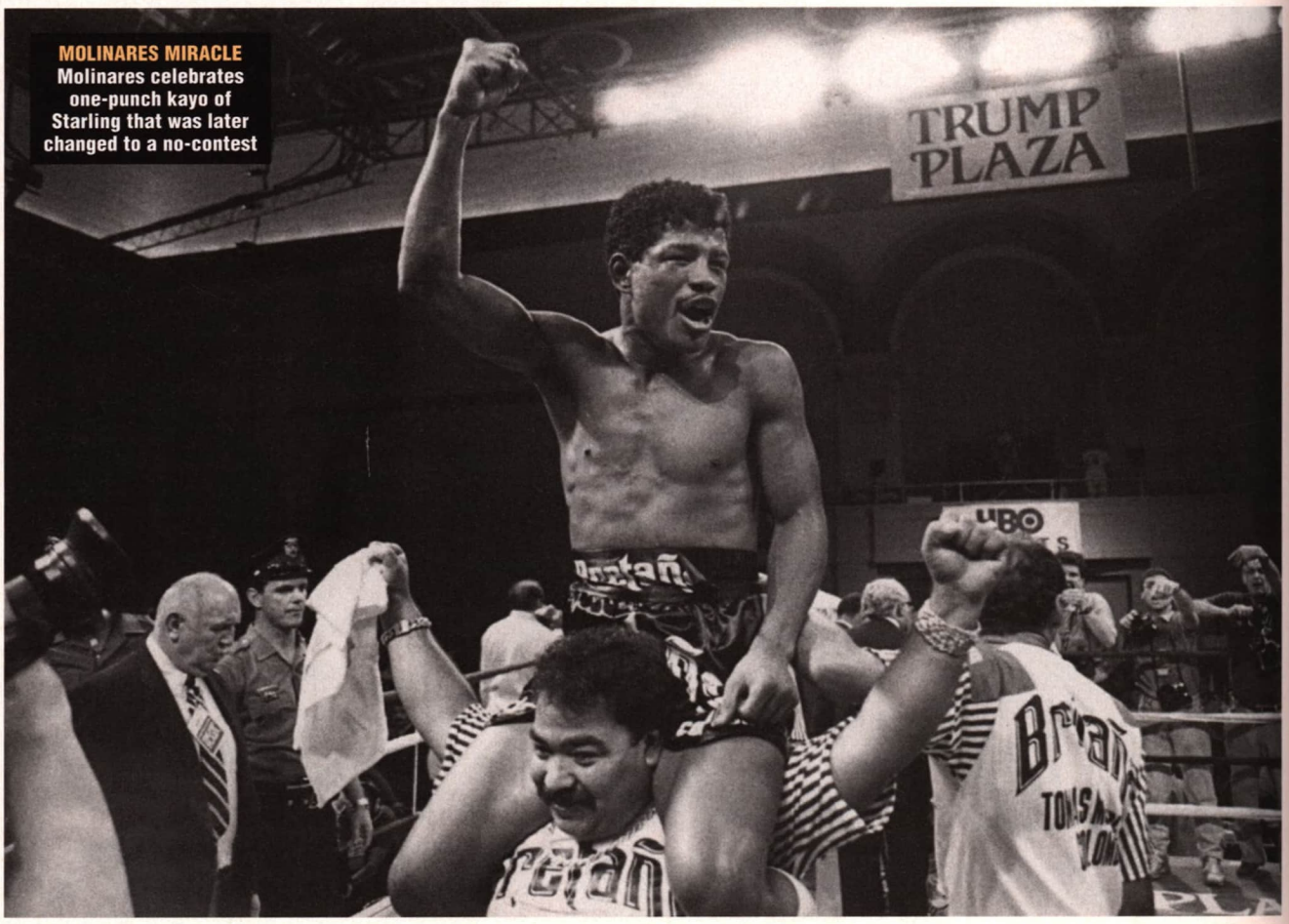
Much of the fast-paced fight was waged at close quarters, where both constantly worked to create and exploit openings. Molinares enjoyed success in the first two rounds with accurate rights to the head and body, but, starting in the third, Starling's stiff jabs, precise counters, and stifling defense enabled him to establish a dominant position. By the fifth, Starling surged and Molinares showed signs of weakening, but all that changed with the final punch of round six.

A huge overhand right to the jaw sent Starling spinning to the canvas, the twisting action injuring his lower right leg. Referee Joe Cortez, believing the punch had been launched at the bell, continued the count because there was no saving by the bell and declared Starling out when he failed to rise.

The Aftermath: As Starling had his leg wrapped and Molinares celebrated with his handlers and the Colombian supporters who stormed the ring, commissioner Larry Hazzard indulged in unofficial instant replay by examining the video on HBO's monitors. After one viewing, Hazzard declared that the final punch was unleashed as the bell sounded and confirmed the TKO.

However, a frame-by-frame examination shows that the bell began sounding as Molinares' previous punch (a wide hook) reached Starling's jaw and that the knockout punch didn't begin until 12 frames in, a full four-tenths of a second after the bell based on a 30 frames-per-second count. The punch reached Starling's jaw 19 frames, or nearly two-thirds of a second, past the point when the bell started ringing. Therefore, Starling should have retained his belt via disqualification or no-contest.

The result eventually was changed to a no-contest, but Molinares was allowed to keep the belt, which he vacated five months later without defending it due to weight-making considerations. He fought twice more, losing by TKO. Starling, who didn't remember the kayo, dissected and dethroned WBC titlist Honeyghan seven months later, which ranked as one of his best performances.



MOLINARES MIRACLE
Molinares celebrates one-punch kayo of Starling that was later changed to a no-contest

VERNON FORREST W 12 SHANE MOSLEY
MSG Theater, New York, New York • January 26, 2002

Setting the Stage: Following a spectacular lightweight reign, Mosley jumped two weight classes and not only dethroned WBC titlist Oscar De La Hoya, but he also vaulted himself atop the pound-for-pound ratings. He then consolidated his standing and power at welterweight by spectacularly dispatching Antonio Diaz, Shannan Taylor, and Adrian Stone to raise his record to 38-0 (35). Going into his fight with Forrest, who was stripped of his IBF belt for fighting Mosley instead of a mandatory, the oddsmakers declared "Sugar Shane" a 7-to-1 favorite more as a tribute to his overwhelming talent, not as a barometer of their head-to-head merits.

If that had been the case, the odds would've been much narrower because the 33-0 (26) Georgian was the last man to defeat Mosley (a 25-14 victory in the semifinals of the 1992 Olympic trials). At 6', he stood three inches taller, knew how to apply that advantage, possessed excellent skills as well as underrated right-hand power. Also, unlike Mosley, Forrest had to wait eight years before getting his first title, which ended in a butt-induced no-contest against Raul Frank. He finally won an alphabet trinket by beating Frank nine months later, but his joy in securing a Mosley fight was short-lived when IBF politics prevented the possibility of becoming a two-belt king. In Forrest's mind, Mosley had already proven his worth, while he needed to show everyone he belonged with the elite.

What Happened: Given the above facts, the surprise wasn't that Forrest beat Mosley; it was that he did it so easily. Mosley's troubles began early in the second when an accidental butt opened a small slice on the hairline, the only cut of Mosley's career. Later that round, a combination highlighted by a blistering Forrest right uppercut dumped the defending beltholder in the neutral corner for the first knockdown of his career. Forrest scored a second knockdown shortly before the bell, but, while Mosley survived the onslaught, he never found the antidote to Forrest's many attributes. The scores of 115-110, 117-108, and 118-108 reflected Forrest's dominance.

The Aftermath: The pair met six months later, and, while Forrest repeated his victory, the manner was less than satisfying as they clutched more than they clouted. Mosley won the 154-pound championship by beating De La Hoya a second time but lost it to Winky Wright soon after. Mosley fought at the elite level throughout the rest of his career, with wins over Fernando Vargas (twice), Ricardo Mayorga, and Antonio Margarito sprinkled with losses to Miguel Cotto, Floyd Mayweather, and Manny Pacquiao. As for Forrest, the tables were about to be turned.

SAGGING SUGAR
Forrest hands Mosley the first loss of his pro career

PHOTO BY JESSE D. GARRABRANT/GETTY IMAGES

RICARDO MAYORGA KO 3 VERNON FORREST

Pechanga Entertainment Center, Temecula, California • January 25, 2003

Setting the Stage: By beating Mosley the first time, Forrest finally received the respect he felt was long overdue. He added to that reputation by duplicating the feat and earning THE RING's 2002 Fighter of the Year award. Now, a year minus one day after the initial Mosley win, Forrest was the hunted while Mayorga, a cigarette-smoking, beer-drinking Nicaraguan wild man who also happened to be Forrest's WBA counterpart, was the hunter—and a loud one at that.

The betting parlors saw Forrest as much as a 10-to-1 favorite before eventually settling to a more reasonable 6-to-1. They believed Forrest's size and talent would trump Mayorga's rocket-fueled but undisciplined approach. But there are horses for courses and styles for fighters, and, for Forrest, the best-laid plans for superstardom were about to meet their monkey wrench.

What Happened: At first, Forrest dealt well with Mayorga's pyrotechnics as he stabbed from long range for the majority of round one. In the final six seconds, however, a cuffing hook/forearm to the neck prompted referee Marty Denkin to issue a questionable count, turning a 10-9 Forrest round into a potential 10-8 for Mayorga. That realization, combined with trainer Ronnie Shields' exhortations to go right at Mayorga, caused Forrest to turn aggressive in round two.

Forrest's harder, straighter blows trumped Mayorga's wild swings, and a flush right uppercut, left hook, and one-two caused Mayorga to blink—if briefly. An emboldened Forrest continued to slug in round three, but, this time, Mayorga had the hammer ready. A wide left to the jawline spun Forrest, and a right to the temple floored him for the second time. Forrest arose at five, but, when Denkin waved a finger across his face, all he got was a vacant stare, prompting a stoppage.

The Aftermath: The six-fight deal Forrest signed with HBO, of which this was fight one, vanished while Mayorga became the world champion. They fought again six months later, and, this time, Forrest used his skills to counteract Mayorga's pugnacity. Many thought Forrest won, but the judges saw Mayorga a majority decision victor.

Injuries forced Forrest to take a two-year hiatus, but, upon returning, he regained his form and a belt when he beat Carlos Baldomir to acquire the WBC junior middleweight title. He lost it in his second defense to Sergio Mora but regained it in what would be his final fight. Forrest was shot and killed during an attempted robbery in July 2009.

Mayorga lost the title to Cory Spinks, and, from then on, failed in fights against the elite: De La Hoya, Trinidad, Mosley, and Cotto all scored knockout wins.

MAYORGA MAYHEM Forrest unsuccessfully tries to fend off charging Mayorga

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

CARLOS BALDOMIR W 12 ZAB JUDAH

Madison Square Garden, New York, New York • January 7, 2006

Setting the Stage: Ever since his amateur days, there had been an aura of potential surrounding Judah. Many fell in love with his fast hands, nimble feet, flashy smile, and the one-punch power that could strike from any angle at any time. It also didn't hurt that he hailed from New York, the media capital of the world.

He was called "Pernell Whitaker with Power" and proved it by scoring 21 kayos in the 27-0 record he carried into his unification fight with Kostya Tszyu. When Tszyu stopped him in two rounds, the emotional immaturity Judah's critics continually cited poured out in a shameful stool-throwing tantrum.

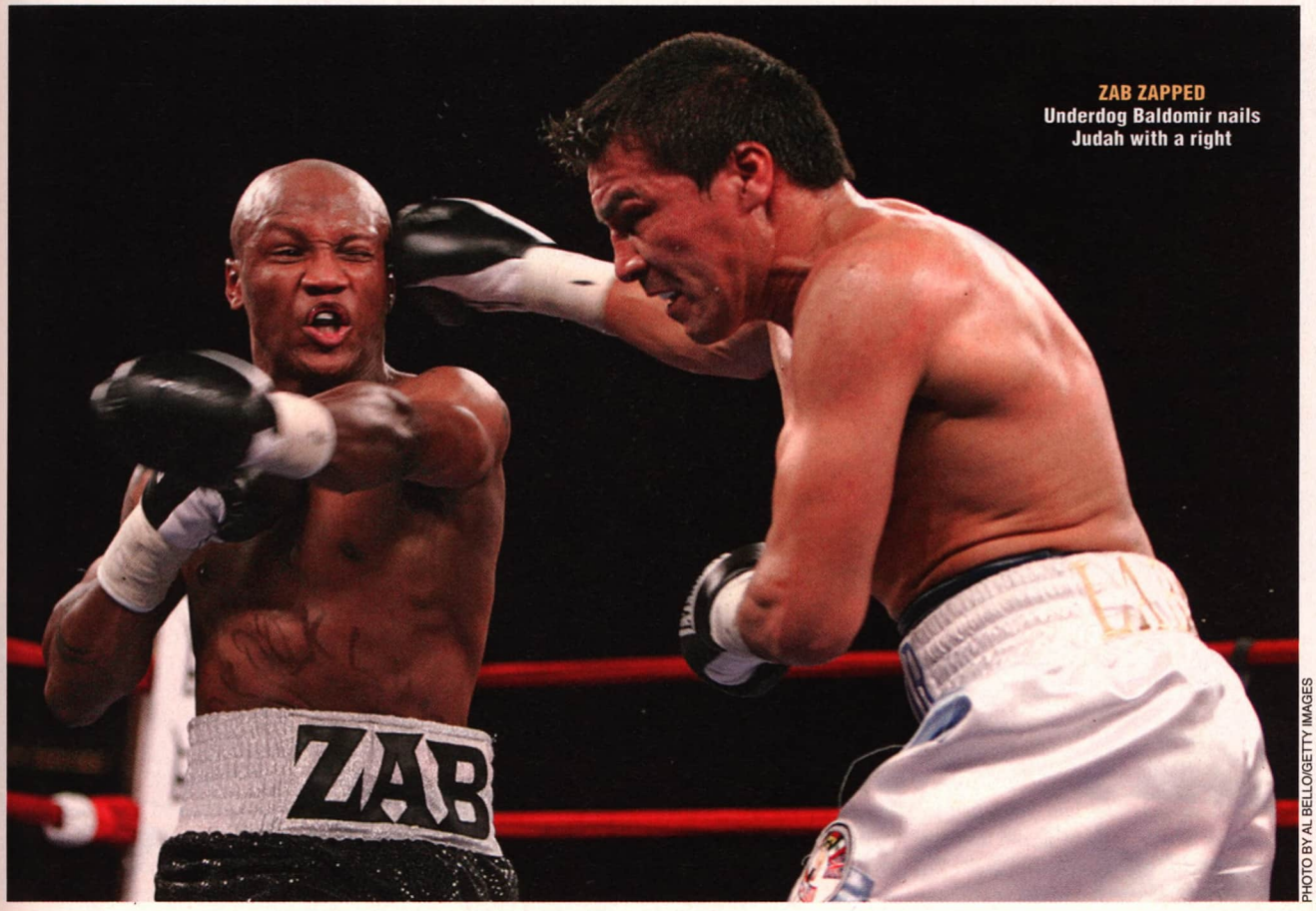
But over time, Judah absorbed the hard lessons, including a 12-round loss to Cory Spinks, and eventually found his way back. When they fought a rematch 10 months later in February 2005, the physical and the emotional finally melded into a truly super performance, a ninth-round TKO of Spinks to win the world championship. After following up with a sizzling three-round kayo of Cosme Rivera, many believed Judah was ready for an incredible run. When he signed to fight mandatory challenger Baldomir at MSG to kick off 2006, the fight had the air of a homecoming football game/pugilistic coronation with the Argentine strongman playing a bit part. In fact, a Judah-Mayweather PPV showdown was already inked for April 8.

Baldomir fit the part of an afterthought: He was a short, stumpy 34-year-old with little hand or foot speed and a propensity for wide-arcing wildness. Baldomir's 41-9-1 (12) record was hardly intimidating, but he was armed with a seven-year, 19-fight unbeaten streak (17-0-2) and ferocious self-belief.

What Happened: Judah's focus problems raged to the surface as he smacked Baldomir on the hip during final instructions and committed various early fouls. The Argentine applied pressure throughout, and, by hitting after the bell in the first round, he showed he too knew some tricks. But the first indication of an upset occurred in the seventh when Baldomir staggered and nearly took out Judah. With Judah fighting in spurts and Baldomir surging, Judah's early lead evaporated, and, when Baldomir stunned Judah with 25 seconds remaining, victory was in sight. To their credit, the judges scored the fight instead of the event, 115-113, 115-112, and 114-113 all in Baldomir's favor.

The Aftermath: For Judah, THE RING's 2006 Upset of the Year was a profound embarrassment that took nearly two years to shake, while Baldomir's win ignited a late-career boom. A kayo of Arturo Gatti led to big-money fights against Mayweather and Forrest that translated to "L's" on the record but many dollars in his wallet. ■

Lee Groves, a freelance writer and historian from West Virginia, is a regular contributor to THE RING.



ZAB ZAPPED
Underdog Baldomir nails Judah with a right

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

NO LAUGHING MATTER

Morales Risks His Comeback Momentum Against "Hyena" Barrios

By Eric Raskin

If the most effective punches are the ones the victim doesn't see coming, then it follows that the most compelling boxing narratives are the ones that fight fans don't see coming. And on that scale, Erik Morales' 2011 career rebirth is a lights-out left hook that crashed home before the opponent's shoulder even began to rotate.

"El Terrible" has been around a long time and taken a lot of shots on his angular jaw. This is a warrior who was first being written off in 2001, a full decade ago! Morales was only 24 years old, yet observers speculated that his best days were behind him after he won a controversial decision over Guty Espadas. He proved that speculation to be misguided, most notably when he defeated Manny Pacquiao in 2005. But when he lost four straight fights following that crowning achievement, retirement seemed the only option. His third fight with "Pac-Man" ended via depressing third-round surrender; the next time out, he couldn't even take an alphabet belt from David Diaz. It was 2007, Morales was now in his 30s, and the time had come to hang 'em up and make plans for a 2012 trip to Canastota.

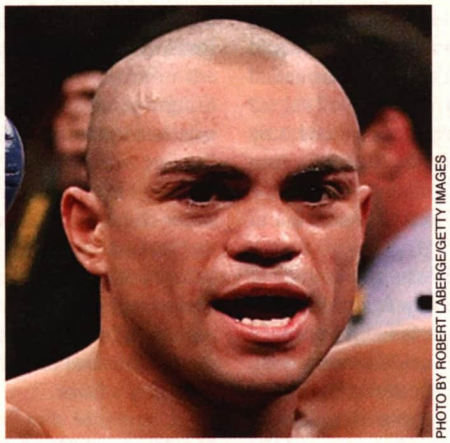


PHOTO BY ROBERT LABERGE/GETTY IMAGES

Jorge Barrios

That Morales returned to the ring last year was not surprising. That he defeated Jose Alfaro, Willie Limond, and Francisco Lorenzo was not surprising. But what one-eyed Morales did against wicked-hitting Marcos Maidana—proving depth perception overrated and coming up just barely short on the scorecards—knocked us off our feet. It was a comeback that defied logic and it instantly made Morales one of the most sensational stories in the sport.

For his next act, on the Floyd Mayweather-Victor Ortiz undercard, Morales is again dipping into the apparently deep well of Argentine badasses, taking on Jorge "The Hyena" Barrios for the vacant WBC junior welter strap. Against Maidana, Morales was a huge underdog. Against Barrios, he's a clear favorite. Barrios is older than Maidana, smaller than Maidana, and not as dangerous with one punch as Maidana. But he's still a legit threat to Morales, having competed at the upper level of the sport for most of the past decade. As was the case with Morales one fight ago, any assessments of Barrios' potential to prevail are governed by the uncertainty over how much the man from Buenos Aires has left.

SURPRISING SHOWING Morales didn't beat Maidana, but he came close

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

CANELO & THE CONTENDER

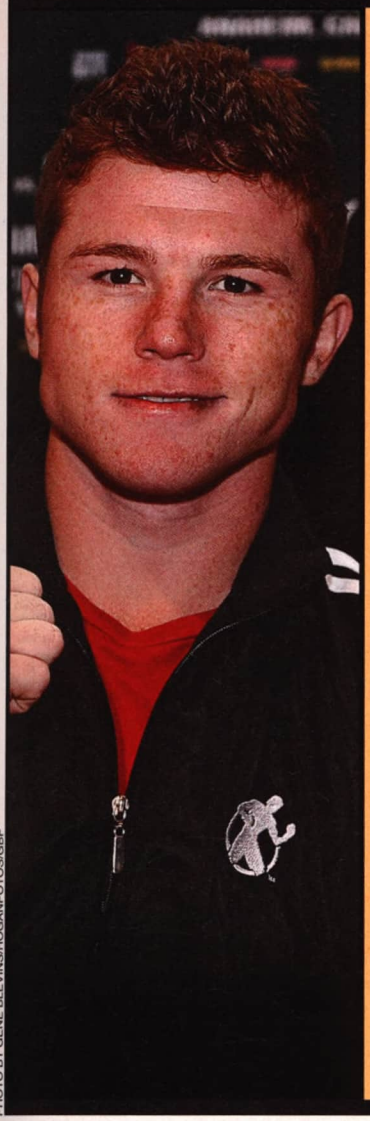


PHOTO BY GENE BLEVINS/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

On the same pay-per-view card but emanating from a separate location—Staples Center in Los Angeles—rising mega-attraction Saul "Canelo" Alvarez will attempt his next step in proving he puts a "pop" and a "u" in "popular." In his first fight since reaching legal drinking age in the US, Alvarez faces Alfonso Gomez, a 30-year-old veteran who, like Canelo, has had to work hard to prove he has the mettle to match the marketing.

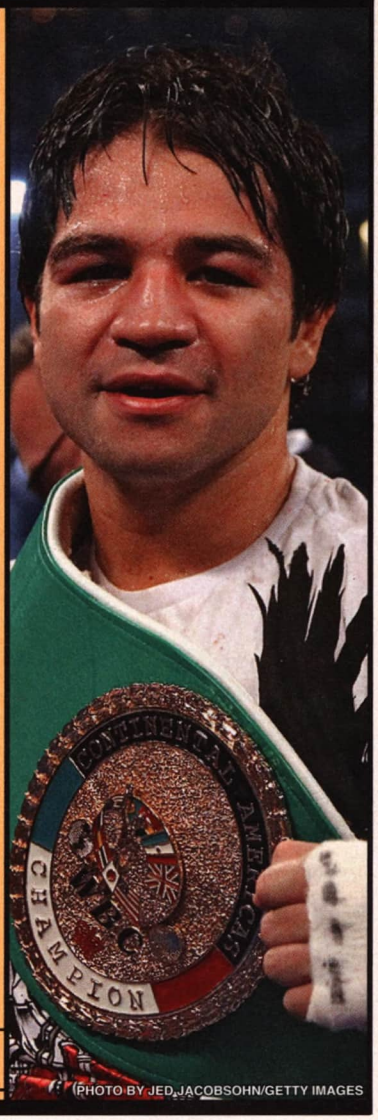
Gomez, 23-4-2 (12), rose to fame on the NBC-televised first season of *The Contender* and has maintained that fame with high-profile wins over Arturo Gatti, Jesus Soto Karass, and Jose Luis Castillo, not to mention a one-sided loss to Miguel Cotto. He represents a lateral move in the progression of Alvarez, who in the past year has notched wins over Carlos Baldomir, Lovemore Ndou, Matthew Hatton, and Ryan Rhodes.

Canelo, 37-0-1 (27), is improving from fight to fight, even in the area in which it's generally hardest to improve, hand speed. Against Rhodes, Alvarez gave his most complete performance yet and forced a stoppage in the 12th round. It's still way too soon to be talking about him standing in a corner opposite Manny Pacquiao, as HBO's Larry Merchant famously did last year. But whether he does or does not someday face a Pacquiao or a Mayweather, with each fight, more signs point to Alvarez being one of the stars who will carry the sport when those two are gone.

Gomez might have been a hurdle too high a year or two ago, but he's a clear underdog against Canelo now. Still, let's not lose sight of the fact that Gomez has only been beaten once since his run on reality television ended. He is, as the name of the show says, a contender.

That said, Alvarez is highly likely to hand Gomez his second post-*Contender* defeat. And it'll make a major statement if he does it as magnificently as Cotto did.

—E.R.



(PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

STEPPING STONE OR STUMBLING BLOCK
Can Gomez (right) upset streaking Alvarez?

Barrios was born exactly one month before Morales. (Both men will be 35 on fight night.) He was a lightweight for his last three fights and spent most of his career before that at junior light. Then again, Morales won his first title at junior feather and only recently ascended to the 140-pound division, so he won't necessarily have a size advantage over Barrios. Inactivity is an issue for The Hyena. Due largely to outside-the-ring problems, most notably a vehicular manslaughter charge from January 2010 that resulted in a court order preventing Barrios from leaving Argentina until now, he's fought only once since November '09.

In general, the story of Barrios' career has been that he's won the smaller fights and come up short in most of his breakthrough opportunities. The wacky warrior known for his oversized sunglasses cracked the American fight fan's consciousness in '03, when he gave then-unbeaten Acelino Freitas all he could handle, famously wiping his bloody head on the ref's shirt en route to a dramatic 12th-round kayo loss in a Fight of the Year candidate. Seven straight wins followed, including knockouts of undefeated Mike Anchondo and Janos Nagy. But Barrios lost his next two major fights, a split decision to Joan Guzman and a gory TKO at the hands of Rocky Juarez. Barrios has since gone on a three-fight winning streak against unremarkable opposition in his homeland.

Barrios is a credible opponent for Morales and certainly one with more name recognition than the other fighter who was under consideration for this opportunity, England's Anthony Crolla. But Barrios isn't in his prime and doesn't do any one thing exceptional in the ring. His track record for losing his biggest bouts rates to continue against Morales (provided Maidana didn't squeeze the last few drops of juice from El Terrible). But the track records of both men suggest a high-impact affair that should make one or both cutmen earn their pay.

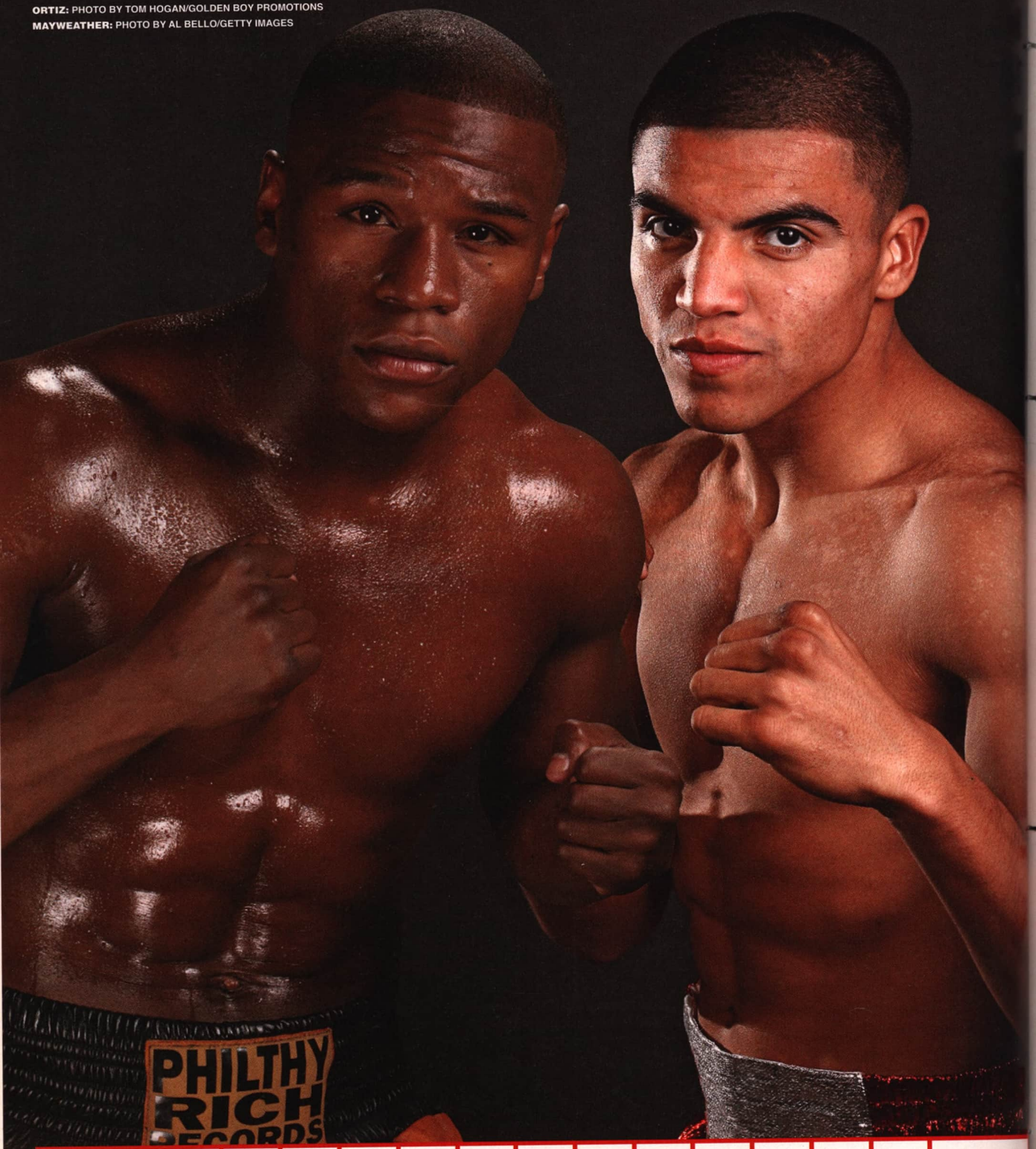
If the fight does indeed go according to script and Morales prevails, it's worth asking, where does this leave the Mexican icon? He has a marquee name, unquestionably. And he apparently is not a shot fighter, which means others can call him out without facing criticism. Basically, everyone at 140 pounds will want to fight Morales if he defeats Barrios.

That could mean a crack at Amir Khan, a fight with the Maidana-Robert Guerrero winner, or possibly a fourth bout with bitter rival Marco Antonio Barrera.

Whatever he chooses (or whoever chooses him), Morales has options. That would have seemed crazy a year or two ago. But Morales matters again, and one win over Barrios would position him to matter almost as much as he did when he was trading punches with a guy named Pacquiao five years ago. ■

OFFICIAL SCORECARD

ORTIZ: PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS
MAYWEATHER: PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
MAYWEATHER													
ORTIZ													

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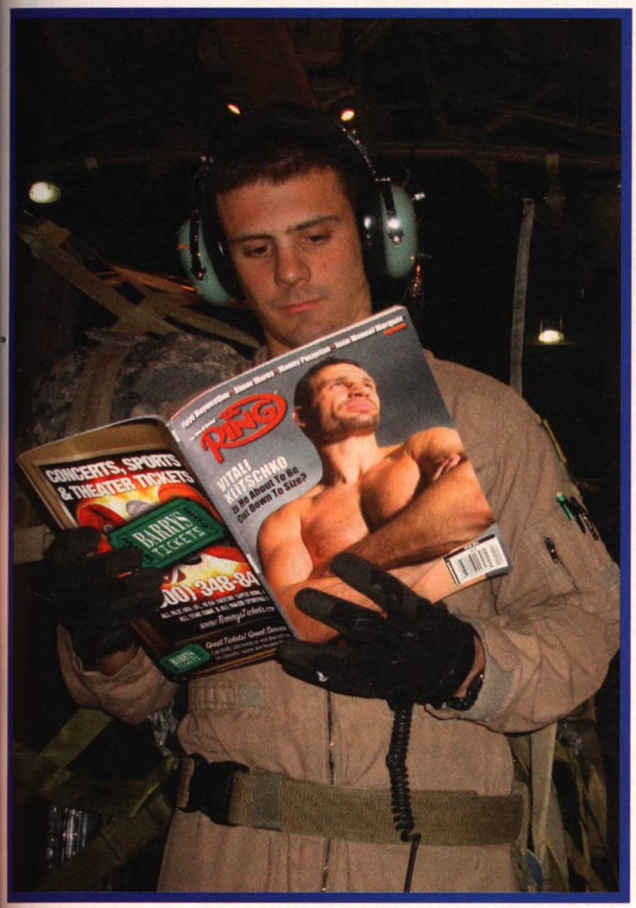

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WORLDWIDE FIGHT RESULTS

Heavyweights

Wladimir Klitschko W 12 David Haye
(Wins WBA Title/Retains World and IBF Titles)
Chris Arreola W10 Friday Ahunanya
Tyson Fury W 12 Dereck Chisora
Joe Hanks W 12 Alfredo Escalera Jr.
Johnathon Banks W 10 Julius Long
Maurice Harris KO 12 Derric Rossy
Elijah McCall KO 1 Maurice Winslow
Kubrat Pulev W 8 Maksym Pediura
Erkan Teper KO 9 Jakov Gospic
Paolo Vidoz W 6 Gabor Farkas

Cruiserweights

Antonio Tarver KO 9 Danny Green
Ola Afolabi KO 1 Terry Dunstan
Shane Cameron KO 12 Dominic Vea
Marco Huck KO 10 Hugo Garay
Firat Arslan KO 5 Lubos Suda
BJ Flores KO 5 Nicholas Iannuzzi
Rachid El Hadak W 12 Rene Huebner
Jon Lewis Dickinson W 10 David Dolan
Giacobbe Fragomeni W 6 Remigijus Ziausys
Silvio Branco W 6 Jevgenijs Andrejevs

Light Heavyweights

Anthony Dirrell KO 2 Kevin Engel
Eduard Gutknecht W 12 Lorenzo Di Giacomo
Tony Bellew W 12 Ovill McKenzie
Bob Ajisafe KO 3 Darren Stubbs

Middleweights

Dominik Britsch KO 9 Ryan Davis
Michael Oliveira KO 6 Jose Soto
Gilberto Sanchez KO 2 Oney Valdez
James Kirkland KO 2 Alexis Hloros
Robbie Bryant W 12 Les Piper
George Tahdooahnippah KO 2 Jimmy Holmes

Junior Middleweights

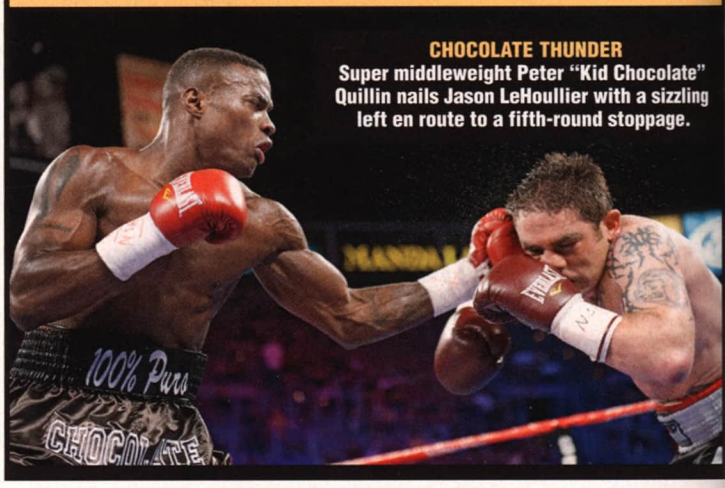
Paul Williams W 12 Erislandy Lara
Carlos Molina W 10 Kermit Cintron
Pawel Wolak D 10 Delvin Rodriguez
Daniel Dawson D 12 Virgil Kalakoda
Patomsuk Pathompothong W 10 Heath Ellis
Gabriel Rosado KO 5 Ayi Bruce
Roberto Ventura KO 2 Antonio Villanueva
Luciano Leonel Cuello KO 2 Uilian Santana Barauna
Kevin Rooney Jr. KO 1 Elmer Vera
Ryan Toms KO 4 Pat McAleese

Welterweights

Selcuk Aydin KO 5 Raman Dzekhkanau
Ismael El Massoudi KO 12 Souleymane M'baye
Nasser Athumani W 12 Yavuz Ertuerk

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Lucian Bute KO 4 Jean Paul Mendy
(Retains IBF Title)
Peter Quillin KO 5 Jason LeHoullier
Jesus Gonzales W 12 Francisco Sierra
Nikola Sjekloca W 12 Khoren Gevor
Nader Hamdan W 12 Daniel Pawsey
Carlos Manuel Baldomir W 10 Ruben Silva Diaz
Chris Fitzpatrick W 10 Scott Sigmon
Anthony Dirrell KO 5 Dante Craig
Matt Korobov W 8 Lester Gonzalez



CHOCOLATE THUNDER
Super middleweight Peter "Kid Chocolate" Quillin nails Jason LeHoullier with a sizzling left en route to a fifth-round stoppage.

Frankie Gavin W 12 Curtis Woodhouse
Lanardo Tyner W 10 Vivian Harris
Alejandro Barrera W 10 Francisco Javier Reza
Jorge Paez Jr. W 10 Jesus Gurrola
Sebastian Lujan KO 9 Mark Melligen
Aaron Martinez Tech. Win 8 Joseph Elegele
Lee Purdy KO 5 Craig Watson
Raymond Serrano W 8 Daniel Sostre
Naoufel Ben Rabah KO 3 Isaac Hlatshwayo

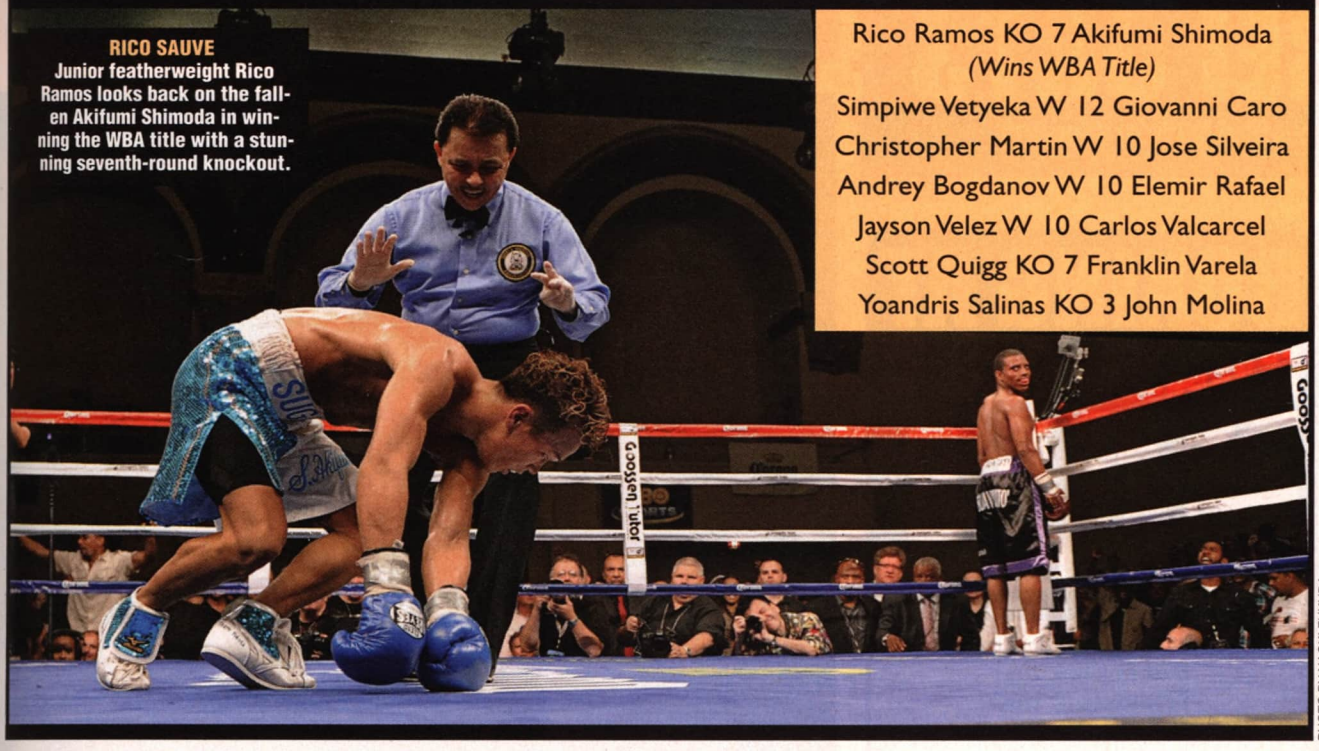
Junior Welterweights

Amir Khan KO 5 Zab Judah
(Wins IFB Title/Retains WBA Title)
Juan Manuel Marquez KO 1 Likar Ramos
Albert Mensah W 12 Andre Gorges
Ashley Theophane KO 10 Jason Cook
Fernando Castaneda KO 8 Fidel Munoz
Brunet Zamora KO 5 Martin Coggi
Claudio Olmedo KO 5 David Peralta
Jessie Vargas KO 2 Walter Estrada
Giuseppe Lauri W 6 Laszlo Komjathi

Lightweights

Brandon Rios KO 3 Urbano Antillon
Kevin Mitchell KO 8 John Murray
Saddam Kietyongyuth W 12 Ronnel Esparas
Reyes Sanchez KO 4 Daniel Valenzuela
Ryuji Migaki KO 10 Shoji Kawase

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS



RICO SAUVE
Junior featherweight Rico Ramos looks back on the fallen Akifumi Shimoda in winning the WBA title with a stunning seventh-round knockout.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Rico Ramos KO 7 Akifumi Shimoda
(Wins WBA Title)
Simpiwe Vetyeka W 12 Giovanni Caro
Christopher Martin W 10 Jose Silveira
Andrey Bogdanov W 10 Elemir Rafael
Jayson Velez W 10 Carlos Valcarcel
Scott Quigg KO 7 Franklin Varela
Yoandris Salinas KO 3 John Molina

Alan Herrera KO 4 Armando Mariscal
Mickey Bey KO 4 Alejandro Rodriguez
Emiliano Marsili KO 1 Paolo Gassani

Junior Lightweights

Ricky Burns KO 1 Nicky Cook
Diego Magdaleno W 10 Alejandro Perez
Fahsai Sakkreerin KO 10 Geoffrey Munika
Fernando Saucedo W 12 Carlos Rodriguez
Fermin De Los Santos W 12 Daniel Hernandez
Floriano Pagliara W 12 Istvan Nagy
Juan Carlos Burgos W 10 Gilberto Leon
Yuandale Evans KO 6 Emmanuel Lucero
Taek-Min Kim KO 5 Sonny Manakane
Marco Lopez KO 3 Eden Marquez

Featherweights

Jhonny Gonzalez KO 4 Tomas Villa
(Retains WBC Title)
Rafael Marquez KO 6 Eduardo Becerril
Orlando Salido KO 11 Kenichi Yamaguchi
Edgar Riovalle KO 1 Juan Carlos Olvera
Viorel Simion KO 9 Jun Talape
Jonathan Barros W12 Celestino Caballero
Martin Ward W 10 Ian Napa
Enrique Bernache KO 4 Alejandro Valdez
Joel Brunker KO 4 Freddie Martinez
Jesus Cuellar KO 3 Hugo Gomez
Eduardo Escobedo KO 2 Joksan Hernandez
Gary Russell Jr. W 8 Eric Estrada

Bantamweights

Christian Esquivel KO 3 Jovanny Soto
Tomoki Kameda W 10 Pumar D. Singwancha
Daiki Kameda KO 2 Chatchai Monthon Gym
Lee Haskins W 12 Mohamed Bouleghcha
Jose Gonzalez W 10 Salvador Arias
Janeth Perez KO 7 Yolis Marrugo Franco

Junior Bantamweights

Hugo Cazares KO 3 Arturo Badillo
(Retains WBA Title)
Daniel Rosas KO 6 Federico Catubay
Oscar Blanquet KO 4 Elfego Sierra

Flyweights

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W12 Takuya Kogawa
(Retains World/WBC Titles)
Omar Soto W 12 Eduardo Gonzalez
Brian Viloria W 12 Julio Cesar Miranda
Wilbert Uicab Tech. Win 10 Anuar Salas
Hernan Marquez KO 3 Edrin Dapudong
Edgar Sosa KO1 Julio Paz
Ricardo Nunez KO 5 Marlon Marquez
Arely Mucino KO 4 Soledad Macedo

Junior Flyweights

Roman Gonzalez KO 7 Omar Salado
Cuello D. Singwancha KO 2 Omar Soto
Oezlem Sahin W 10 Corina Carlescu
Jessica Chavez KO 5 Mayerli Altamar
Esmeralda Moreno W 10 Maria Salinas

Strawweights

Katia Gutierrez W 10 Ana Arrazola
Javier Martinez KO 6 Armando Vazquez
Yuko Kuroki KO 4 Nongkiat Rongrearnkilalorat
Roilo Golez KO 10 Thongthailek Sor Tanapinyo

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Compiled by Don Stewart

Paul Williams

BOXING AT BOARDWALK HALL

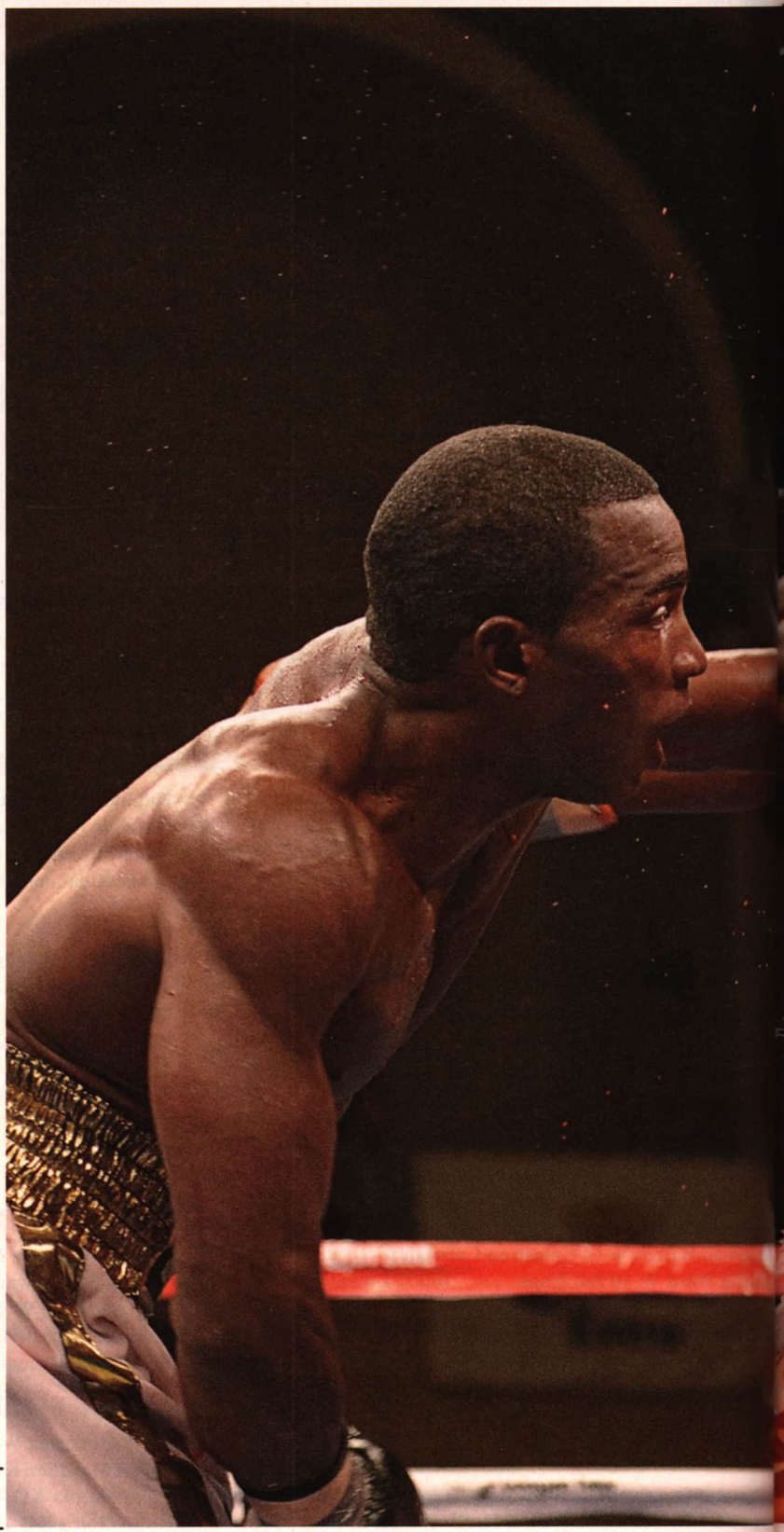
Location: Atlantic City, NJ
Date: July 9, 2011
Television: HBO
Promoters: Goossen Tutor Promotions, Golden Boy Promotions

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Middleweight
Referee: Sam Viruet (USA)

Paul Williams
Age: 29
Weight: 153½
Residence: Aiken, SC
Birthplace: Atlanta, GA
Record: 40-2 (27)
Ring Ranking: 8 (middleweight)

Erislandy Lara
Age: 28
Weight: 153
Residence: Miami, FL
Birthplace: Guantanamo, Cuba
Record: 15-1-1 (10)
Ring Ranking: 5



MANDIBLE MANGLER
Lara distorts Williams' face with a flush left

W 12 Erislandy Lara

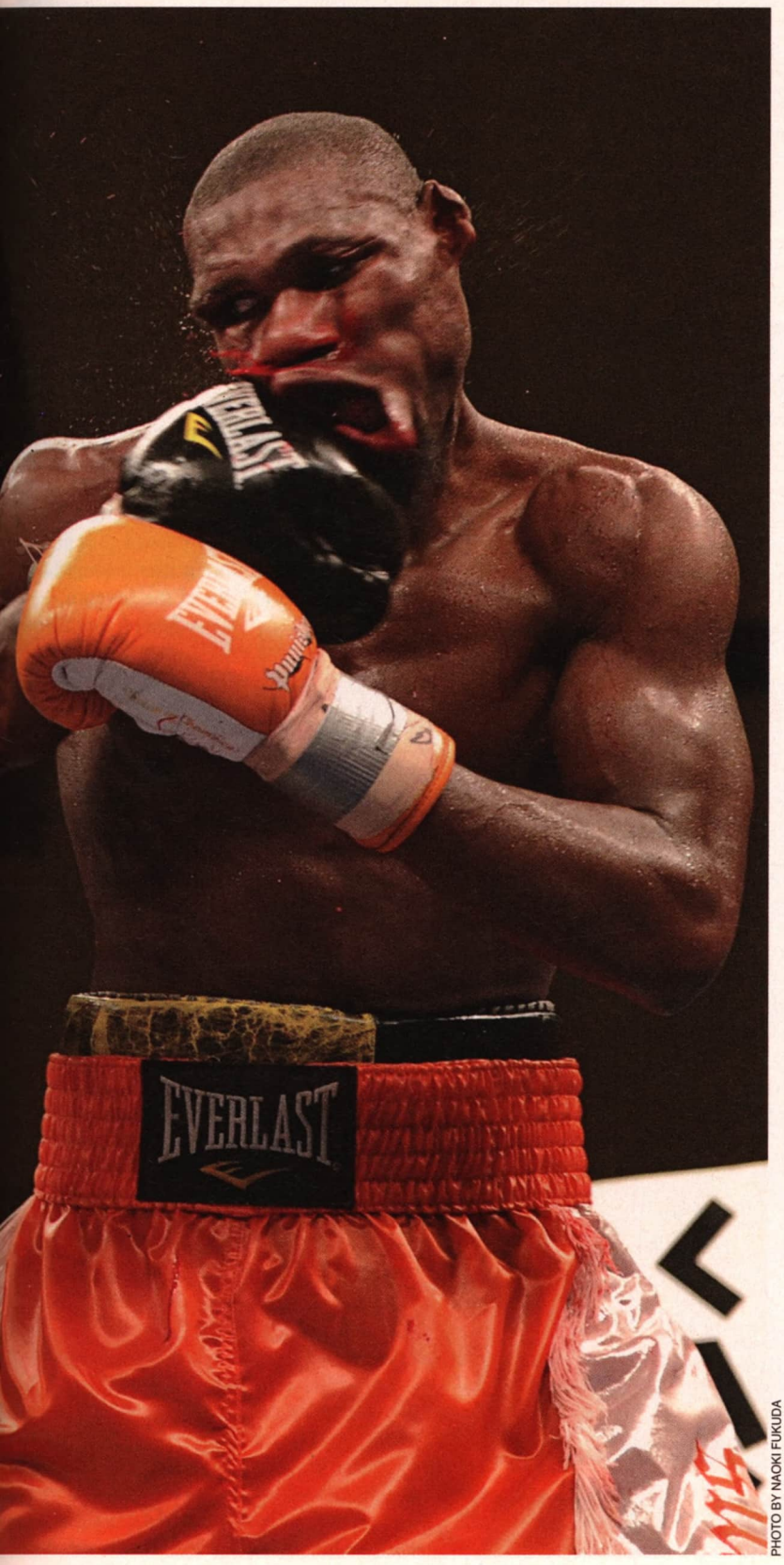


PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Making his first appearance in eight months since suffering the frightful knockout to world middleweight champion Sergio Martinez in November 2010, Williams was trying to rebuild his image and stir up noise for a rubber match with Martinez. It didn't exactly turn out that way.

Round after round, Cuban expatriate Lara took the Martinez blueprint against Williams and hammered his taller foe with a torrent of left hands to the face and chin. Williams appeared sluggish in round one, as southpaw Lara got underneath and inside his considerable reach to land the first left. And so it went, from the beginning of the fight, through much of the middle rounds, into the waning minutes of the 12-round bout: Lara pounding away at Williams, who would occasionally get inside and land a few bodyshots.

By the fifth, it appeared that Williams was sensing the fight was falling beyond his grasp. There was a sparse sense of urgency as he bounced a few shots off Lara, who began developing a hematoma on the left side of his head that resembled the one Hasim Rahman grew against Evander Holyfield nine years ago. But Lara's corner got the swelling under control, and, in the sixth, Lara used distance and cunning to get inside the slow-reacting Williams to score again with straight lefts to the head and chin. From there, as Lara repeatedly strafed Williams with hard shots, the focus shifted from a third fight with Martinez to how much more punishment the courageous Williams could take.

As the final bell sounded, a somewhat disconsolate Williams trudged back to his corner, head down, possibly wondering what was next in his ring career. That's when the absurdity commenced. Al Bennett's score of 114-114 was read first to the hushed crowd, followed by Donald Givens' 116-114 tally and Hilton Whitaker's 115-114 card awarding the fight by majority decision, somehow, to Williams. THE RING scored it 118-110 for Lara, agreeing with every other card in press row.

"I don't know what the judges saw," a stunned Lara said through a translator. "I thought I won the fight."

So did virtually everyone else who saw it.

Don't blame Williams for the shoddy and inept scores of the three New Jersey judges. "The Punisher" did what he was capable of doing against Lara. Unfortunately for Williams, that proved to be very little. Someone, apparently, did fault the judges. New Jersey State Athletic Control Board commissioner Aaron Davis placed all three judges on indefinite suspension four days after the fight.

Joseph Santoliquito

Rico Ramos KO 7 Akifumi Shimoda

As the rounds went by, Ramos seemed content to hop around junior featherweight beltholder Shimoda, who was fighting outside his native Japan for the first time in his eight-year pro career.

Southpaw Shimoda, who was defending the WBA strap for the first time, looked sharp as he landed an occasional right or left against an opponent who seemed pleased just to be there, challenging for a belt at Boardwalk Hall and appearing on HBO's *Boxing After Dark*.

Round after round, Shimoda piled up the points, scoring with lead lefts down the middle and to the body. Some of Shimoda's punches were thrown wide and wild, while Ramos had trouble landing anything flush. By the third round, a pattern was set: Shimoda would be the stalker and Ramos the runner trying to spot an opening. Shimoda kept closing in while Ramos retreated.

The fourth and fifth rounds displayed more of the same. At times, both fighters swatted nothing but air, though Shimoda would break that missing mode with a few connects to the body and then work upstairs to Ramos' head. The fifth round saw Ramos' right eye begin to bleed due to a cut caused by an accidental headbutt.

Maybe it was the sight of his blood, but, whatever it was, Ramos suddenly woke up. He became much more aggressive in the sixth round when referee Benjy Esteves issued a second warning to Shimoda to keep his punches up.

Down 59-55 on two judges' scorecards (and THE RING's) and trailing 60-54 on the third, Ramos began increasing the pressure on Shimoda in the seventh, stepping closer and engaging. Shimoda came at Ramos aggressively at the start of the seventh, landing looping lefts to Ramos' face. As time was winding down in the seventh, however, Ramos saw his chance. After missing with a right, Shimoda was left lunging and vulnerable. Ramos wasted no time in landing a left hook that traveled about four inches but carried the impact of a howitzer when it landed squarely on Shimoda's jaw.

The beltholder fell backwards in a heap. Shimoda's futile attempt to get up showed how badly he was hurt. He tried standing, only to fall stumbling into Esteves, who vainly tried to catch Shimoda as if he were a ground ball. Shimoda was through. Esteves stopped it at 2:46 of the seventh.

Joseph Santoliquito

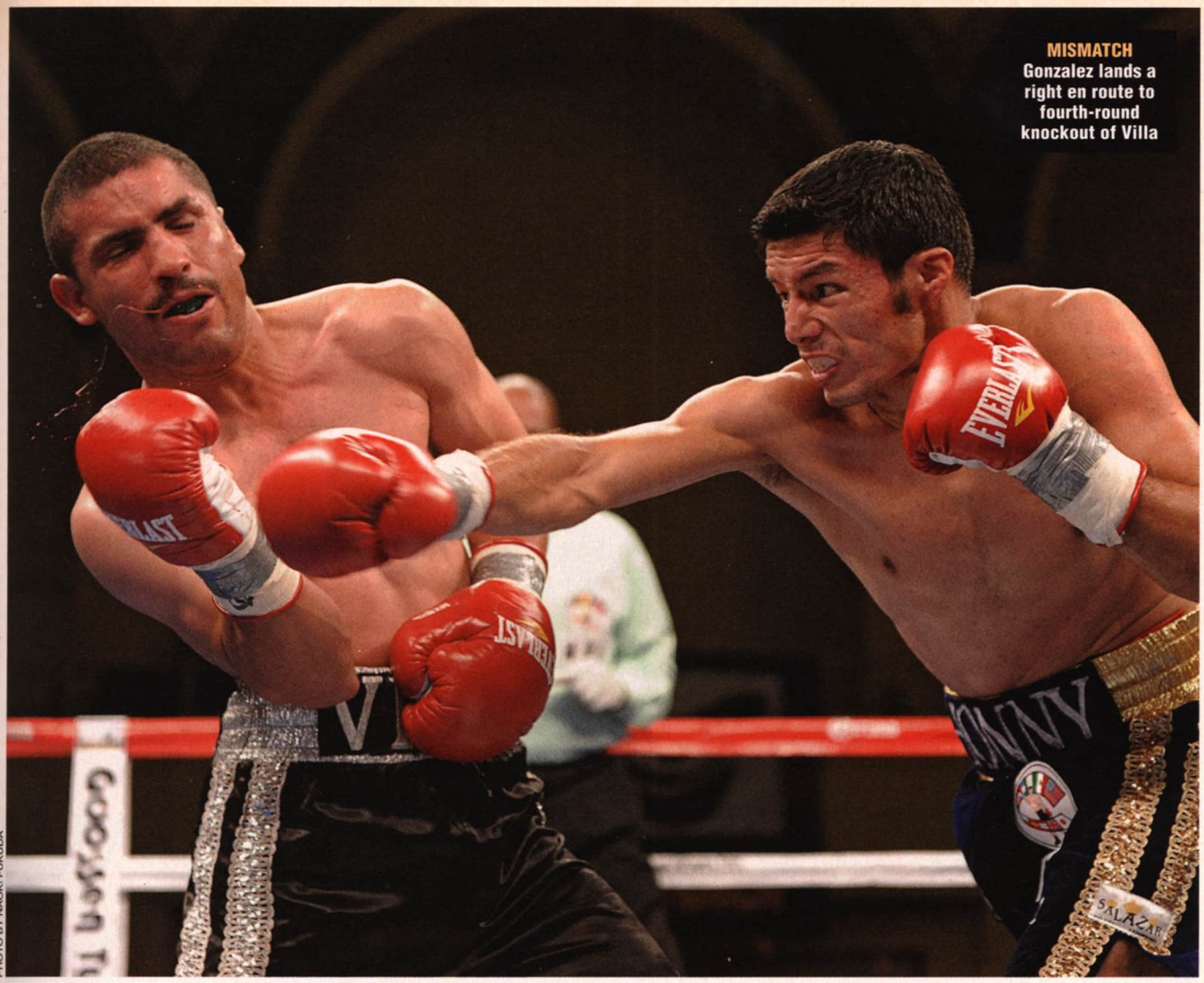
MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Featherweight • **Referee:** Benjy Esteves (USA)

Rico Ramos	Akifumi Shimoda
Age: 24 • **Weight:** 122	**Age:** 26 • **Weight:** 121½
Residence: Pico Rivera, CA	**Residence:** Tokyo, Japan
Birthplace: Pico Rivera, CA	**Birthplace:** Sapporo, Japan
Record: 20-0 (11)	**Record:** 23-3-1 (10)
RING Ranking: 2	**RING Ranking:** 3

SURPRISE ATTACK
Trailing on points, Ramos suddenly woke up and stopped Shimoda in the seventh

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA



MISMATCH
Gonzalez lands a right en route to fourth-round knockout of Villa

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Jhonny Gonzalez KO 4 Tomas Villa

Villa was a week shy of his birthday when he was suddenly added to the untelevised portion of the Paul Williams-Erislandy Lara undercard with a shot at WBC featherweight beltholder Gonzalez. Some present. Villa, who was 3-2 in his previous five bouts, with both losses coming by stoppage, was stepping in against one of the sport's hottest fighters.

Gonzalez was riding an eight-fight winning streak, having rebounded from his third-round stoppage loss to WBC junior featherweight beltholder Toshiaki Nishioka in May 2009. Gonzalez gradually reached contender status again with seven-straight victories, all within the distance, and he earned the right to take on WBC featherweight beltholder Hozumi Hasegawa in Kobe, Japan, in April of this year. Gonzalez snatched his eighth-straight victory with a fourth-round stoppage of Hasegawa, and was looking forward to some promising fights ahead.

It seemed Roinet Caballero was all set to be Gonzalez' first title defense in Mexico, but, when the venue fell through, it left Gonzalez looking for another opponent and a place to fight. Villa stepped in as a late substitute, and promoter Dan Goossen flew him and Gonzalez to Atlantic City.

Villa served as a walking punching bag, losing every second of every round. Gonzalez upped his attack in the fourth, landing a left hook to the body and sending Villa down in pain. Villa valiantly tried to rise, but referee Eddie Cotton waved the mismatch over at the 49-second mark of the fourth round.

"This was kind of a tough fight at first," said Gonzalez, playing down the mismatch. "But I began to gradually wear him down and dominate him until the knockout."

For his troubles, Villa got to celebrate his 28th birthday on July 14, sipping from a straw and nursing a broken jaw.

Joseph Santoliquito

MATCH STATS

Division: Featherweight
Referee: Eddie Cotton (USA)

Jhonny Gonzalez
Age: 29
Weight: 125½
Residence: Mexico City, Mexico
Birthplace: Pachuca, Mexico
Record: 49-7 (43)
Ring Ranking: 8

Tomas Villa
Age: 27
Weight: 124 1/2
Residence: Midland, Texas
Birthplace: Ojinaga, Mexico
Record: 23-8-4 (14)

Brandon Rios KO 3 Urbano Antillon

This fight raised Rios up and into star territory. Against a tough opponent who could bang, "Bam Bam" came out to the center of the ring, went nose to nose, and traded big shots to the body and head until it was over, including teeth-rattling uppercuts. Both men threw sharp, short, accurate punches on the inside, where they're most comfortable, but Rios threw just a little harder and his chin was just a little sturdier. He fights the way recently retired lightweight Juan Diaz used to, getting in close and putting leverage on every shot, but his hands are much heavier than those of "The Baby Bull."

As usual, Rios had ugly things to say about his opponent before the fight. He chose to believe Antillon had insulted his wife, which Bam Bam said helped him maintain ferocity.

It looks like only a very slick boxer could defeat Rios because it's unlikely anyone in his weight division could outslug him. He's part of a growing squadron of rough-and-ready fighters training out of Oxnard, California, a blue-collar town just up the coast from Los Angeles that packs more fistic talent per square inch than any hamlet west of Philadelphia.

Because every shot was thrown with mean intentions, it was difficult for observers to figure out which punches did the worst damage. Antillon appeared to rattle Rios at the end of round two, but, early in the third round, he went down from a barrage that included a devastating right hand. After rising to beat the count, Antillon got caught again, went down, and made it up again. Referee David Mendoza let them continue, but Antillon began to stagger as Rios stood across the ring, and Mendoza wisely called a halt at 2:49.

This was the kind of battle that will also raise the stock of the loser. Yet for reasons known only to promoter Bob Arum, he seems intent to match Rios against Marco Antonio Barrera, who turned pro nearly 22 years ago. In boxing, there are forces quick to convert even the most inspiring event into garbage.

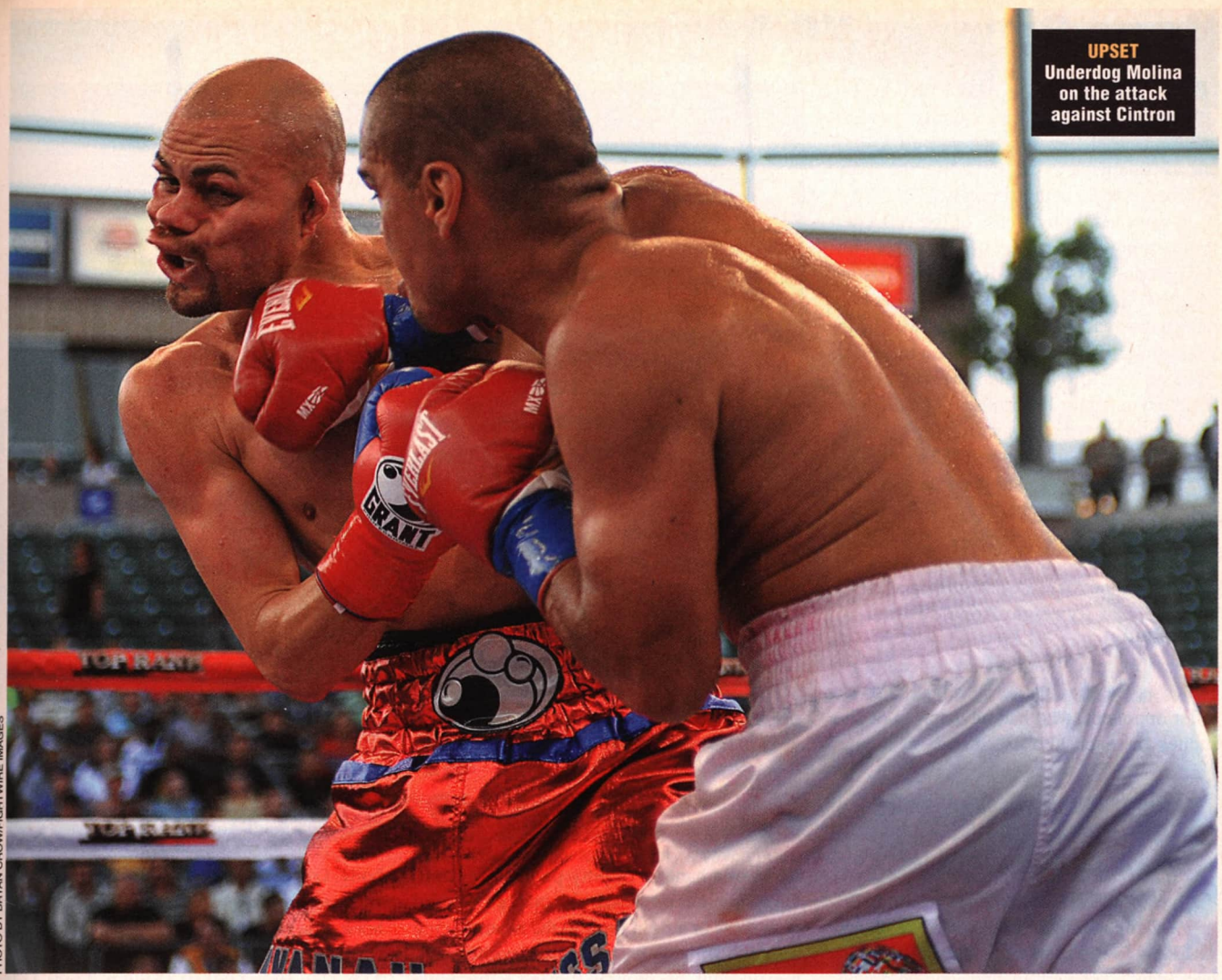
Ivan Goldman

TRENCH WARFARE
Rios rips into Antillon during brief but exciting slugfest

PHOTO BY BRYAN CROW/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

MATCH STATS

	Brandon Rios	Urbano Antillon
Division: Lightweight	**Age:** 25 • Weight: 135	**Age:** 28
Location: Carson, CA	**Residence:** Oxnard, CA	**Weight:** 134¾
Date: July 9, 2011	**Birthplace:** Lubbock, TX	**Residence:** Maywood, CA
Television: Showtime	**Record:** 28-0-1 (21)	**Birthplace:** Namiquipa, Mexico
Promoter: Top Rank	**Ring Ranking:** 1	**Record:** 28-3 (20)
Referee: David Mendoza (California)		



UPSET
Underdog Molina on the attack against Cintron

PHOTO BY BRYAN CROW/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Carlos Molina W 10 Kermit Cintron

For the first few rounds, it was easy to believe that Cintron was just taking it slow and would open up later, but these thoughts faded as it became clear that he was slower and catching a lot of punches. Molina deftly handled almost everything he tried as though the moves were telegraphed.

It's easy to see from Molina's record that he doesn't have much pop. What he does have is a work ethic and the ability to ignore conventional wisdom and just go out there and perform. He seemed to gain confidence with each round as he mixed up his punches, banging body and head. By the eighth round, he had Cintron busted up, in trouble along the ropes, and not firing back.

Round nine was all Molina. Cintron clearly needed a kayo in round 10 and didn't get it. Immediately after the bell, Molina started posing for his victory photos. To his credit, Cintron made no excuses for a contest that was also scored pretty low on the excitement meter.

Cintron was ranked second at 154 pounds by THE RING entering this fight. He has endured many hard fights, including two against Antonio Margarito and his very possibly tampered wraps. The date on his carton might be expired. The California judges deserve credit for scoring on what they saw, not on any preconceived ideas. Pat Russell, Max DeLuca, and Marty Denkin each scored it 98-92, though their rounds didn't all match up. THE RING scored it 98-93 Molina.

Molina, who began his career at 8-4-1, extended his unbeaten streak to 12 bouts. It was his third-straight impressive showing this year, following a March draw with Erislandy Lara and an April kayo of Allen Conyers. All four of Molina's losses and both of his draws have come against unbeaten opponents.

Ivan Goldman

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Middleweight
Location: Carson, CA
Date: July 9, 2011
Television: Showtime
Promoter: Top Rank
Referee: Jerry Cantu (California)

Carlos Molina
Age: 28 • **Weight:** 151¾
Residence: Chicago, IL
Birthplace: Patzcuaro, Mexico
Record: 19-4-2 (6)
RING Ranking: 6

Kermit Cintron
Age: 31 • **Weight:** 149¼
Residence: Reading, PA
Birthplace: Carolina, Puerto Rico
Record: 32-4-1 (28)

Hugo Cazares KO 3 Arturo Badillo

At the Plaza de Toros Eduardo Fontanet, THE RING top-rated junior bantamweight Cazares was no bull and all business as he took out the overmatched Badillo in three rounds.

It was the fourth defense of the WBA belt for the southpaw Cazares, who called out fellow strapholders Tomas Rojas and Cristian Mijares afterward. Cazares has a nine-bout unbeaten streak since moving up two classes from junior flyweight following a technical-decision loss to Ivan Calderon in an August 2008 bid to regain THE RING 108-pound title.

Badillo earned a dubious number-12 ranking by the WBA and a shot at "El Incredible" with a record that looked good on paper. He had stopped 18 opponents in 21 bouts, but few of those opponents were known outside of Baja California, and "Fuerte" was stopped himself in nine rounds when he stepped up in class against flyweight Ronald Barrera in April 2010.

The first three minutes was a feeling-out round as Cazares patiently adjusted to his taller opponent, who had advantages of five inches in reach and 4½ inches in height. Cazares calmly worked his shorter jab, while an excited Badillo fired wild bombs that missed their mark.

Cazares began to let his left hand go in the second. Badillo was unable to slip or counter it and was rocked with straight lefts and left hooks upstairs throughout the round. Sensing an opportunity to end things early, Cazares unleashed his bombs on Badillo in the third. He put Badillo down with a straight left in the opening minute. Badillo bravely beat the count, only to be dropped again by another Cazares left. After rising again, Badillo ate a pretty three-punch combo that put him on the floor for a third time and prompted referee Gustavo Padilla to call it off. The time was 2:00.

"It's not that the fight was easy; there are always risks in the ring," Cazares said afterward. "What's hard is the daily work to be the best physically and mentally, and here is the result. We worked hard on the strategy, on my defense to avoid surprises, and on my attack to throw perfect lefts up and down. That was the difference."

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Bantamweight • **Location:** Mazatlan, Mexico • **Date:** July 9, 2011
Promoter: Baja Boxing • **Referee:** Gustavo Padilla (Panama)

Hugo Cazares	Arturo Badillo
Age: 33 • **Weight:** 115	**Age:** 24
Residence: Los Mochis, Mexico	**Weight:** 115
Birthplace: Los Mochis, Mexico	**Residence:** Tijuana, Mexico
Record: 35-6-2 (25)	**Birthplace:** Tijuana, Mexico
RING Ranking: 1	**Record:** 20-2 (18)

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam W 12 Takuya Kogawa

In 2007, after suffering his first loss in 11 years, to Daisuke Naito, THE RING flyweight champion Pongsaklek Wonjongkam vowed to never again take an opponent lightly. His perseverance and hard work have paid off to the tone of 16-straight victories (and a draw), including a win against undefeated Japanese star Koki Kameda in March 2010 for the vacant world title. Japan's Kogawa was purportedly a tough fight for Wonjongkam. However, the champion was rarely pushed and once again demonstrated his superior abilities in making his second defense.

Wonjongkam was the more relaxed of the two fighters, content to use his head movement and deft footwork to set up his counterpunches while inside the pocket. Kogawa threw speedy punches in greater quantity, but his light blows were largely ineffective. The champion had begun to find his rhythm by the fourth round, landing with short right hooks to the head and digging to the body with the left uppercut.

Throughout the contest, Kogawa was wary of southpaw Wonjongkam's accurate responses. Though game, the Tokyo native's herky-jerky style was geared more toward surviving the distance than punishing and defeating the champion.

By round six, the pattern of the fight was set. Kogawa would work his way inside and let go of a handful of pitty-pat punches until the champion countered with one or two solid bodyshots or a right hook to the head, forcing his withdrawal. Wonjongkam continually moved right, positioning himself to hit while not being hit.

By the eighth round, Kogawa's stamina was fading, and his punches grew increasingly feeble. Wonjongkam repeatedly skipped in and out of the zone, scored with one or two thumping blows, and then slid gracefully out of danger. Toward the end of the round, an arcing left landed to Kogawa's temple, wobbling the challenger and accenting Wonjongkam's supremacy.

In round 12, Wonjongkam punished Kogawa with uppercuts and short hooks to the body. Out on his feet, Kogawa continued to fight until being slammed with a huge right hook, one-two combination at the final bell.

The judges scores: Stephen Blea (USA) 118-110, Franz Marti (Switzerland) 117-111, and Jae-Bong Kim (South Korea) 116-112, all in favor of Wonjongkam. THE RING scored the bout 117-111, also in favor of the champion.

With his career now in its 17th year, Wonjongkam continues to show he is a cut above anyone who steps in the ring with him. He is next scheduled to face Dondon Jimenea of the Philippines in August before squaring off against THE RING's 10th-rated Edgar Sosa later this year, possibly in Mexico.

Scott Mallon

MATCH STATS

Division: Flyweight • **Location:** Songkhla, Thailand • **Date:** July 1, 2011
Promoter: Petchyindee Promotions • **Referee:** Lou Moret (USA)

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam	Takuya Kogawa
Age: 33 • **Weight:** 112	**Age:** 26
Residence: Nakorn Ratchisima, Thailand	**Weight:** 111½
Birthplace: Nakorn Ratchisima, Thailand	**Residence:** Tokyo, Japan
Record: 81-3-1 (44)	**Birthplace:** Tokyo, Japan
RING Ranking: Champion	**Record:** 17-2 (10)

CLOSE CALL
Many observers thought Sturm (left) was fortunate to get the nod over Macklin

PHOTO BY ALEX GRIMM/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Felix Sturm W 12 Matthew Macklin

Sturm proved to be a man of his word as both a boxer and a promoter before the fight when he predicted an exciting battle and afterward when he promised to give Macklin a rematch following Sturm's widely disputed split-decision victory before a noticeably swayed hometown crowd at Lanxess Arena.

"It was a tough, brutal fight," Sturm said. "He deserves a rematch, and I will give it to him. First, we have to talk to the TV people though."

Both optimally conditioned boxers had big scoring moments throughout 12 fine rounds of trading that was highlighted by Macklin's tireless aggression and Sturm's inspired counterpunching. Macklin fulfilled his promise to fight balls-out the entire way. That's pretty much what he did, with Sturm responding in kind. The result was an excellent encounter that was indeed worthy of an encore.

At press time, Sturm had reportedly offered a November rematch at the Lanxess Arena. On this night, the venue was packed with an announced crowd of 18,801 Sturm loyalists who appreciated each fighter's solid effort but gave a very mixed reaction to the verdict.

Macklin charged out and threw a couple dozen bodyshots before a casually composed Sturm came back with effective lefts that set the pattern for the give-and-take affair. Macklin pounded Sturm's reddened torso as Sturm found a higher gear with jarring inside crosses.

Macklin surged ahead in the early rounds before Sturm began to assert himself after the fifth. Macklin troubled Sturm all night with a swarming, mauling offense, while Sturm repeatedly landed huge uppercuts that had Macklin wobbly by the finish.

At least half the frames were almost too close to call. Neither man ever really took control. While exhausted by the finish, neither fighter was ever in serious trouble. After the 10th round, it still seemed like anybody's fight. The furious 12th deserves Round of the Year consideration. The judges were split in the end, with Levi Martinez (USA) scoring it 115-113 for Macklin, while Roberto Ramirez (Puerto Rico) and Jose Ignacio Martinez (Spain) each saw it 116-112 for Sturm, who made his 10th successful defense since regaining the WBA belt in April 2007. THE RING had it 116-115 for Macklin.

"We got first-class treatment all week, so I won't say anything except that I'm disappointed and I doubt there's many people who saw the fight that think I lost," said a bruised but unbowed Macklin. "I'd rather have a rematch someplace neutral like the US, but I'll fight him again in Cologne if he gives me another chance."

"Many people are talking about their opinion of the fight," mused an unmarked Sturm. "If there is a rematch, we will hear more talk and opinions. It is really just the fight itself that matters."

What matters most about the Sturm-Macklin bout was how admirably both men performed before, during, and after fight. Let's have another please.

Phil Woolever

MATCH STATS

Division: Middleweight
Location: Cologne, Germany
Date: June 25, 2011
Promoter: Sturm Promotions
Referee: Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa)

Felix Sturm
Age: 32
Weight: 159
Residence: Cologne Germany
Birthplace: Leverkusen, Germany
Record: 36-2-1(15)
RING Ranking: 1

Matthew Macklin
Age: 29
Weight: 159½
Residence: Birmingham, England
Birthplace: Birmingham, England
Record: 28-3 (19)
RING Ranking: 3

SHOW ME SOMETHING GREAT!

Location: St. Charles, MO • **Date:** June 25, 2011 • **Television:** HBO
Promoters: Don King Productions, Bash Boxing, Lights Out Promotions

Devon Alexander W 10 Lucas Matthysse

Unless your name is Arturo Gatti, it's hard to lose three fights in a row and continue to be involved in big fights for big money. Good thing for Alexander then that the judges have seen fit to award him two wins in what easily could have been an 0-3 stretch, the latest a wretched decision over heavy-handed Argentine Matthysse at the Family Arena, not far from Alexander's hometown of St. Louis.

Alexander had plenty to prove in coming off his first official defeat, a head-clash induced technical decision against Timothy Bradley that left some calling Alexander a quitter. He certainly showed heart against Matthysse, standing up to numerous bombs and trying throughout to win the fight. But it was Matthysse who scored the fight's only knockdown and appeared to win a majority of the rounds, only to wind up on the wrong end of a split decision. When Matthysse lost to Zab Judah in New Jersey six months earlier, it could have gone either way, and he just got a bit unlucky; this one felt more like a flat-out robbery.

The first three rounds were close, with Alexander working behind a southpaw jab and following with left hands, while Matthysse fired straight rights and bodyshots. Alexander didn't seem to be committing to his punches, but he was moving his hands and boxing smoothly en route to winning two of the first three rounds on THE RING's scorecard. Everything changed in the fourth when Matthysse, punching from an unusual angle, connected with a straight right hand to the *right* side of Alexander's chin, dropping the former 140-pound beltholder on his rear. Alexander got up quickly from the first knockdown of his career and battled back admirably, particularly when he came back to win the fifth.

But Matthysse took over with authority as the fight entered its second half. An action-packed sixth gave way to a furiously one-sided seventh, with Matthysse landing overhand rights, left uppercuts, and bodyshots almost at will. Alexander looked tired, and Matthysse kept pouring it on for arguably a 10-8 round. Alexander bravely stood and traded in the eighth, but he took, by far, the worst of it to both the head and body.

The young local fighter rallied impressively in the ninth, showing the sort of energy and accuracy that forced you to ask, "Where is this coming from?" He scored with some of his best left hands of the fight, and it seemed, if he could carry the momentum into the 10th, at least he'd have a reasonable argument that he'd won the fight. Instead, the Argentine reseized control in the final round, bombing with right hands to capture the round decisively as he seemingly secured the victory in a fan-friendly fight.

UNLUCKY LUCAS Matthysse, pictured aiming a jab at Alexander, again came out on the wrong end of a controversial decision

PHOTO BY DAN WATERS/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Welterweight
Referee: Rafael Ramos (USA)

Devon Alexander
Age: 24 • **Weight:** 139½
Residence: St. Louis, MO
Birthplace: St. Louis, MO
Record: 22-1 (13)
RING Ranking: 4

Lucas Matthysse
Age: 28 • **Weight:** 140
Residence: Buenos Aires, Argentina
Birthplace: Chubut, Argentina
Record: 28-2 (26)
RING Ranking: 7

Two of the judges, however, didn't see it that way. Brett Miller (USA) tabbed it 96-93 for Matthysse, the same as THE RING. But Denny Nelson (USA), who favored Alexander in his dubious hometown win against Andreas Kotelnik two fights earlier, had Alexander on top 95-94. And despite Matthysse winning four rounds decisively, Carlos Colon (Puerto Rico) gave him only three rounds and had the St. Louis favorite winning by an unconscionable 96-93 score.

"I wanted to show people I'm a warrior," Alexander said. "People said I quit in the Bradley fight. I wanted to show that I've got heart."

"It was a rough fight, but I think I won it," Matthysse offered. "Once again, they robbed me in the United States."

Matthysse's stock wasn't diminished in the least in the "defeat," though his desire to fight in America again might have been. As for Alexander, he proved he could be an entertaining fighter, but his chances of becoming an elite one look slim. He announced plans after the fight to move up to welterweight, where he probably won't find the going any easier.

K-9 POWER
Bundrage finished strong to turn back Powell's title bid

PHOTO BY DAN WATERS/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

Cornelius Bundrage W 12 Sechew Powell

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Middleweight • **Referee:** Ernie Sharif (Pennsylvania)

Cornelius Bundrage	Sechew Powell
Age: 38 • **Weight:** 152¼	**Age:** 32
Residence: Detroit, MI	**Weight:** 152½
Birthplace: Detroit, MI	**Residence:** Brooklyn, NY
Record: 31-4 (18)	**Birthplace:** Brooklyn, NY
Ring Ranking: 7	**Record:** 26-3 (15)

The first time Bundrage and Powell fought each other, it was 2005, both were undefeated prospects, and Powell won by knockout in a frenetic fight that lasted only 22 seconds and featured an unofficial double knockdown. The rematch at the Family Arena couldn't have resembled the original less. Both were ranked contenders (with Bundrage holding the IBF 154-pound belt), the fight went the 12-round distance, and this time "K9" got his hand raised in the end.

As is the case with most Bundrage fights, the action was choppy, featuring a good bit of clinching and a lot of missed punches. Throughout, Bundrage was throwing and landing more than his opponent, but Powell appeared to be landing the heavier blows. That's not to say Bundrage didn't land some quality punches. In the fourth, he scored with a flurry that seemed to stun "Iron Horse," only to lose momentum when ref Ernie Sharif paused the action to warn Bundrage for pushing Powell's head down. Before round's end, Powell had recovered and managed to stagger Bundrage with a series of shots.

After building an early lead by being the aggressor, Bundrage seemed to be tiring in the seventh and eighth, and Powell took advantage with productive rounds. In one noteworthy sequence in round eight, Powell went to the ropes to lure Bundrage in and counterpunch him, and he did just that, rocking Bundrage twice.

But the semifinalist on Season Two of *The Contender* got his second wind and outhustled Powell over the final third of the fight. The Emanuel Steward-trained Bundrage was particularly sharp in the 12th round, moving surprisingly well, potshotting Powell, making the New Yorker miss, and landing some of his best shots in the closing seconds. At the final bell, Bundrage began talking trash and appeared to inadvertently spit in Powell's face, prompting Powell to launch a punch after the bell. The situation was contained without escalating any further.

The scores were all over the map, with Patricia Morse Jarman (Nevada) seeing it 115-113, Joseph Pasquale (New Jersey) scoring 117-111, and Shafeeq Rashada (New Jersey) handing in a card of 119-109, all for Bundrage.

It's been a remarkable run for the perennially underrated Bundrage, who upset Cory Spinks to acquire his belt last August. In a division full of rising stars, K9 seems to be well-positioned for a nice payday or two as he approaches age 40.

Tavoris Cloud KO 8 Yusaf Mack

MATCH STATS

Division: Light Heavyweight
Referee: Sam Williams (Michigan)

Tavoris Cloud	Yusaf Mack
Age: 29 • **Weight:** 175	**Age:** 31
Residence: Tallahassee, FL	**Weight:** 174¼
Birthplace: Tallahassee, FL	**Residence:** Philadelphia, PA
Record: 23-0 (19)	**Birthplace:** Philadelphia, PA
Ring Ranking: 2	**Record:** 29-4-2 (17)

Despite his impressive knockout rate (83 percent), it's debatable whether Cloud is really an elite puncher or just a pretty good one who racked up a lot of quick knockouts early in his career against inferior opposition. Either way, his power was enough to ultimately see him past fringe contender Mack, earning him a stoppage at 2:57 of the eighth round of a surprisingly competitive fight.

Given the superior punching power and physical strength of IBF light heavyweight titlist Cloud, who outweighed Mack by nine pounds on HBO's unofficial fight-night scale, Mack's plan was to stand still as infrequently as possible. He generally won the rounds in which he followed that plan, and he generally lost those in which he didn't. The opening round fell into the former category, with Mack boxing on his toes and beating the relaxed, patient Cloud with sheer activity. In round two, "Thunder" Cloud used a body attack to slow Mack down and eke out a close round. The next two rounds repeated the pattern of the first two; Mack boxed nicely in the third, then Cloud walked the Philly fighter down enough to win the fourth.

That pattern was condensed into a single round in the fifth, with "Mack Attack" controlling the first half by moving well and bloodying Cloud's nose and Cloud rallying to dominate the second half. During the next couple rounds, neither man was landing much in the way of effective punches, which opened the door for Mack to arguably win the stanzas with impressive defense and ring generalship.

Through seven, judge Adelaide Byrd (Nevada) had Mack ahead 67-66 (as did The Ring), while Jerry Griffin (Missouri) had it 67-66 for Cloud and Fran Bechen (Iowa) saw Cloud leading 68-65. The scores all became moot in the eighth. With 30 seconds to go in the round, a sudden looping left by Cloud sent Mack staggering into the corner, where the ropes kept him from going down. The prefight favorite pounced and unloaded a salvo, the key blow being a right to the ribs that sent Mack to the canvas. Mack rose, but he didn't fulfill referee Sam Williams' request for him to step toward him, so Williams was forced to wave off the contest with three seconds remaining in the round.

With the win, Cloud has positioned himself as probably the most worthy challenger to the winner of the October light heavyweight championship fight between Bernard Hopkins and Chad Dawson. There's talk of a bout between Cloud and Jean Pascal first, though it was only in the very early stages of discussion as of press time.

Pawel Wolak D 10 Delvin Rodriguez

In a Fight of the Year candidate, junior middleweights Wolak and Rodriguez waged war on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*, a match that fittingly had no official loser.

Wolak was coming off the most impressive performance of his career, a six-round drubbing of former top-10 contender Yuri Foreman in March. Meanwhile, Rodriguez was a heavy underdog, having won just two of his past seven fights. Rodriguez contemplated retirement prior to facing Wolak, hadn't fought in almost a year, and was moving up from welterweight.

Wolak was the aggressor throughout, relentlessly pressuring Rodriguez round after round. "The Raging Bull," as Wolak is called for his pressure style, controlled the early rounds, ripping shots to Rodriguez' midsection and then mixing it up to the head. Rodriguez looked to back up and land straight countershots on the charging Polish native and did so with much success.

In the middle rounds, Rodriguez' straight shots started to take their toll as, time and again, Rodriguez walked Wolak into a straight right down the pipe. A grotesque hematoma developed on Wolak's right eye around round four, shades of Hasim Rahman in his June 2002 bout with Evander Holyfield. Wolak's whole face was disfigured to the point where his vision was surely impaired, and Rodriguez took advantage, focusing his attack on the swollen side of Wolak's face with straight lefts and left hooks.

But Wolak pressed on, telling the ringside physician he could see—even though he later admitted that he lost vision in the eye from round six on—in an effort to keep the fight alive. The late rounds could have gone either way as the pair went toe-to-toe, much to the delight of the raucous Roseland Ballroom crowd.

In the end, the fight was deemed a majority draw. It was the rare draw that was actually a popular decision. Judge Tom Schreck (New York) scored it for Rodriguez, 97-93, but was overruled by tallies of 95-95 by judges Julie Lederman (New York) and Steve Weisfeld (New Jersey). The Ring had the same tally as Lederman and Weisfeld, 95-95.

Wolak threw 1,050 punches in the bout, an average of 108.5 per round. Ninety-one percent of the fight's total connects were power shots, according to CompuBox, illustrating just how brutal the affair was.

After the bout, talk predictably turned immediately to a rematch. That's one rematch fans would surely want to see.

Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Middleweight
Location: New York, NY
Date: July 15, 2011
Television: ESPN2
Promoters: Star Boxing, Top Rank
Referee: Steve Smoger (New York)

Pawel Wolak	Delvin Rodriguez
Age: 29 • **Weight:** 153½	**Age:** 31 • **Weight:** 153
Residence: Mount Arlington, NJ	**Residence:** Danbury, CT
Birthplace: Debica, Poland	**Birthplace:** Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic
Record: 29-1-1 (19)	**Record:** 25-5-3 (14)
Ring Ranking: 9	

"COOKIE" CRUMBLES
Burns lands a right, but it was Cook's back injury that ended the fight in the opening round

PHOTO BY ANDREW YATES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Ricky Burns KO 1 Nicky Cook

Scotland's Burns retained his WBO junior lightweight bauble for the third time with a one-round stoppage of former beltholder Cook, but the bizarre ending meant it was a win that did little to enhance Burns' reputation. That is a pity given that the heavily tattooed Glaswegian is developing into a formidable force with punching power that far outstrips his meager 26 percent knockout rate.

The 5'6½" Cook was hardly a worthy opponent, considering that he'd put in only one no-consequence six rounder in the 16 months since he lost the belt to Roman Martinez. He had also spoken openly to reporters about back problems while training for the fight, suggesting he was suffering from a deteriorating condition akin to sciatica.

In contrast, the 5'10" Burns is a boxer at the peak of his powers. He had fought three times since outpointing Martinez last September, and, though he has yet to face a challenger within range of THE RING's top 10, his form suggests he's capable of competing with the best.

Burns, who looked two divisions bigger than Cook, landed a thumping hook to the body early in the first that caused the Londoner to buckle in agony and signal to referee Phil Edwards that his back had "gone." After a standing eight-count, he crumpled without another punch being landed, his face etched with pain.

It was clear Cook was in no condition to continue, but Burns was allowed another duck shoot. He raked Cook's torso with thumping, heavy-duty rights, and the former titlist fell again. Bravely, Cook dragged himself up, but his corner had seen enough and threw in the towel. The fight was stopped at the 1:33 mark.

Cook left the ring on a stretcher. After a minor ripple of boos, Burns received a prolonged cheer from the Echo Arena crowd, which had also witnessed Kevin Mitchell return from his defeat against Michael Katsidis last May to stop the previously unbeaten lightweight contender John Murray in the eighth round of a thriller.

Burns now has won 17 in a row since losing to Carl Johanneson in 2007, but it is time for him to face a more serious challenger. The one he desires is South Africa's Mzonke Fana, who was recently stripped of his IBF belt. That bout would be for THE RING belt, which is currently vacant.

"I'm a wee bit disappointed," he said of the Cook affair, "after all the training and for all the fans who have come down for the fight."

Gavin Evans

MATCH STATS

	Ricky Burns	Nicky Cook
Division: Junior Lightweight	**Age:** 28 • **Weight:** 130	**Age:** 31
Location: Liverpool, England	**Residence:** Coatbridge, Scotland	**Weight:** 130
Date: July 16, 2011	**Birthplace:** Bellshill, Scotland	**Residence:** Dagenham, England
Promoter: Frank Warren	**Record:** 32-2 (9)	**Birthplace:** Stepney, England
Referee: Phil Edwards (England)	**RING Ranking:** 2	**Record:** 30-3 (16)

PHOTO BY BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Vitali Klitschko Main Event

WBC Heavyweight Title

According to THE RING's Germany correspondent, Phil Woolever, the WBC heavyweight title bout between defending beltholder Vitali Klitschko and challenger Tomasz Adamek has stirred up even more interest in Europe than the Wladimir Klitschko-David Haye showdown.

Although he has rarely fought in his homeland in recent years, Adamek is a huge star in the country of his birth, and a capacity crowd of 45,000 will be on hand at the new Sadion Miejski in Wroclaw, Poland, to cheer him on.

This intriguing contest pits a longstanding but aging titleholder against an accomplished but undersized challenger.

12 Rounds Tomasz Adamek

Former world cruiserweight champion and WBC light heavyweight titleholder Adamek has only fought six times as a heavyweight, the same number of times as another former cruiserweight champ, Evander Holyfield, who won the world title in his seventh heavyweight bout.

Klitschko, on the other hand, has a political career in his future and is not expected to continue fighting much longer. Nevertheless, the fiercely proud "Dr. Ironfist" certainly wants to retire on his own terms and will be firmly focused on handing Adamek his second pro defeat.

Is the stage set for an upset, or will the scheduled 12-rounder ultimately turn out to be a another case of a good big man beating a good small man? All questions will be answered on September 9 in a highly significant match, televised in the USA by HBO.

VITALI KLITSCHKO

PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

VITALI KLITSCHKO KO 10 CHRIS ARREOLA
Arreola fought well but couldn't match Klitschko's power

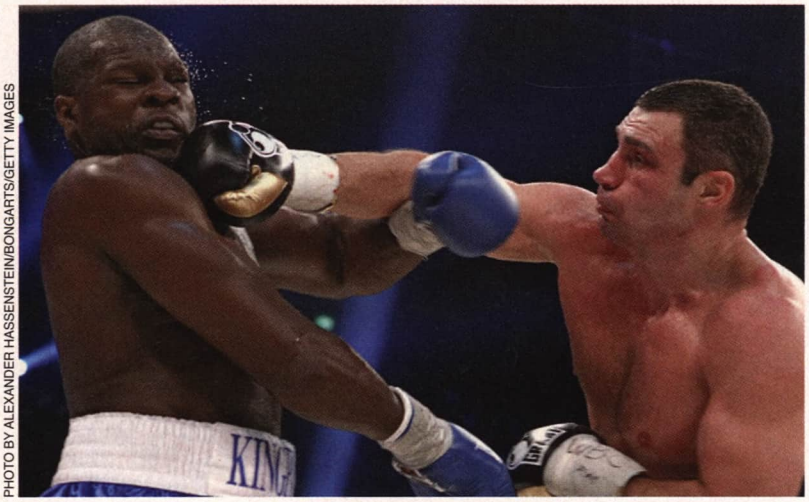


PHOTO BY ALEXANDER HASSENSTEIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

VITALI KLITSCHKO W 12 KEVIN JOHNSON
Johnson lasted the distance but hardly won a round

PHOTO BY HECTOR MATA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

VITALI KLITSCHKO KO 8 CORRIE SANDERS
Vitali avenges brother Wladimir's loss

Record and World Rating

Is 42-2 with 39 knockouts … Glossy 95-15 (80) amateur career climaxed with a gold medal at the 1995 Military World Championships … Turned pro in November 1995 … Won vacant European heavyweight title with second-round kayo of Mario Schiesser in October '98 … Captured WBO heavyweight title with second-round kayo of Herbie Hide in June '99 … Lost WBO belt to Chris Byrd via ninth-round TKO in April 2000 …. Stopped on cuts by Lennox Lewis in bid to win world heavyweight championship in June '03 … Annexed vacant RING magazine and WBC heavyweight titles with eighth-round TKO of Corrie Sanders in April '04 … Retired due to injuries after stopping Danny Williams in December '04 … Returned to action in October '09, regaining WBC trinket with TKO of Samuel Peters … Has since tallied six successful defenses … Is rated number one at heavyweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Is 39 years old … Stands 6'7½" with an 80-inch reach … Massive, well-proportioned physique has been hampered with injuries to his back and knees, which led to premature retirement in 2004 … His chin, which withstood numerous bombs from Lennox Lewis, is arguably the best in the division.

Best Weapons

Knows how to use his extraordinary size—especially height and reach—to it's full advantage … Telephone pole-like left jab softens up opponents and piles up points … Thudding right is usually the fight-ender.

Previous Fight

Peculiar first-round kayo of previously undefeated Odlanier Solis, March 19, in Cologne, Germany, was a highly unsatisfying affair … A counter right caught Solis on the forehead and sent him to the floor … The Cuban challenger immediately grabbed his right knee … He tried to use the ropes to haul himself back up, but he was unable to continue … It turned out that Solis had suffered a serious knee injury that required several surgeries to repair.

Quality of Opposition

Has faced almost every heavyweight of note since the dawn of the 21st century, including Lennox Lewis (KO by 6), and an assortment of journeymen and fringe contenders … Notable and semi-notable victims include: Chris Arreola (KO 10), Samuel Peter (KO 8), Corrie Sanders (KO 8), Kirk Johnson (KO 2), Juan Carlos Gomez (KO 9), Kevin Johnson (W 12), Herbie Hide (KO 2), and Shannon Briggs (W 12).

TOMASZ ADAMEK

Record and World Rating

Is 44-1 with 28 knockouts … Began boxing at the age of 12 and enjoyed a 108-12 amateur career, which included winning the Poland middleweight championship in 1995 and '96 … Turned pro in March '99 and campaigned exclusively in Europe until May 2005, when he won the vacant WBC light heavyweight title via majority decision over Paul Briggs in Chicago, Illinois … Lost WBC 175-pound strap to Chad Dawson in February '07 and moved up to the cruiserweight class … Won vacant RING magazine championship and vacant IBF cruiser title by decision over Steve Cunningham in December '08 … Made three successful defenses before relinquishing the cruiserweight championship in order to fight as a heavyweight … TKO'd Andrew Golota in heavyweight debut in October '09 … Scored five more victories as a heavyweight to earn title shot … Is rated number two at heavyweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Is 34 years old … Stands 6'1½" with a 75-inch reach … Is a small heavyweight by today's standards, having fought most of his career at light heavyweight and cruiser … Don't let his somewhat chunky-looking body fool you; he's always in top condition … Outstanding chin.

Best Weapons

Well-rounded arsenal, features educated jab to set up powershots … Crackling right hand that finished many cruisers and light heavyweights is not as potent against heavyweights but good enough to keep them honest.

Previous Fight

Pounded out a unanimous 12-round decision over outclassed and poorly conditioned Kevin McBride, April 9, in Newark, New Jersey, where Adamek has become a big favorite with the large Polish-American community … The 6'6", 285-pound McBride was the final tune-up in preparation for the even taller Klitschko, but, although the flabby Irishman was battered throughout the fight, he finished on his feet, losing the decisions by scores of 120-107 and 119-108 (twice).

Quality of Opposition

Light heavy and cruiserweight opposition was strong, including Paul Briggs (W 12, W 12), Thomas Ulrich (KO 6), Chad Dawson (L 12), O'Neil Bell (KO 8), Steve Cunningham (W 12), and Johnathon Banks (KO 8) … Best heavyweight win was hard-fought, 12-round decision over fellow contender Chris Arreola … Other heavyweight foes include Jason Estrada (W 12), Michael Grant (W 12), and Vinnie Maddalone (KO 5).

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

TOMASZ ADAMEK W 12 CHRIS ARREOLA
Arreola was Adamek's most significant heavyweight victim

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

TOMASZ ADAMEK W 10 JASON ESTRADA
Adamek outboxed Estrada, who outweighed him by 16½ pounds

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

TOMASZ ADAMEK KO 5 VINNY MADDALONE
Wild-swinging Maddalone was totally outclassed

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VITALI KLITSCHKO

Defense

Gigantic 80-inch reach and punishing left jab keeps most opponents at long range … Strong enough to wrap up any adversary if the need arises … Most foes too busy protecting themselves to launch sustained attack.

Style

Typical stand-up European approach, greatly aided by his size … Stiff-looking but effective footwork is often overlooked … Tough mental outlook, as demonstrated in cut-eye loss to Lewis … Very good finisher.

The Questions

Will old (or new) injuries slow him down? Is this the fight where age catches up with him? Will the highly partisan Polish audience unnerve him after years of fighting in front of adoring German fans? If he loses, will it end his career?

TOMASZ ADAMEK

Defense

More lateral movement since moving up to heavyweight … Competent boxing skills despite a somewhat cumbersome style … Exceptional chin has carried him through 45 pro fights … Lone loss came via decision.

Style

Stalk and destroy mode of his light heavyweight and cruiser days has given way to more pragmatic methods at heavyweight … Bangs well to the body against larger opponents … Stays calm under fire.

The Questions

Is he simply too small to beat a man of Klitschko's size? Will his best punches have any effect? Can his normally imperious chin hold up under Klitschko's potent punches? Will he become the first Poland-born fighter to win a heavyweight title?

THE OUTCOME

Adamek will give it everything he has and make it entertaining. Nonetheless, providing his knees don't give out on him, Klitschko's prodigious size and strength should be enough to carry him to a comprehensive points verdict.

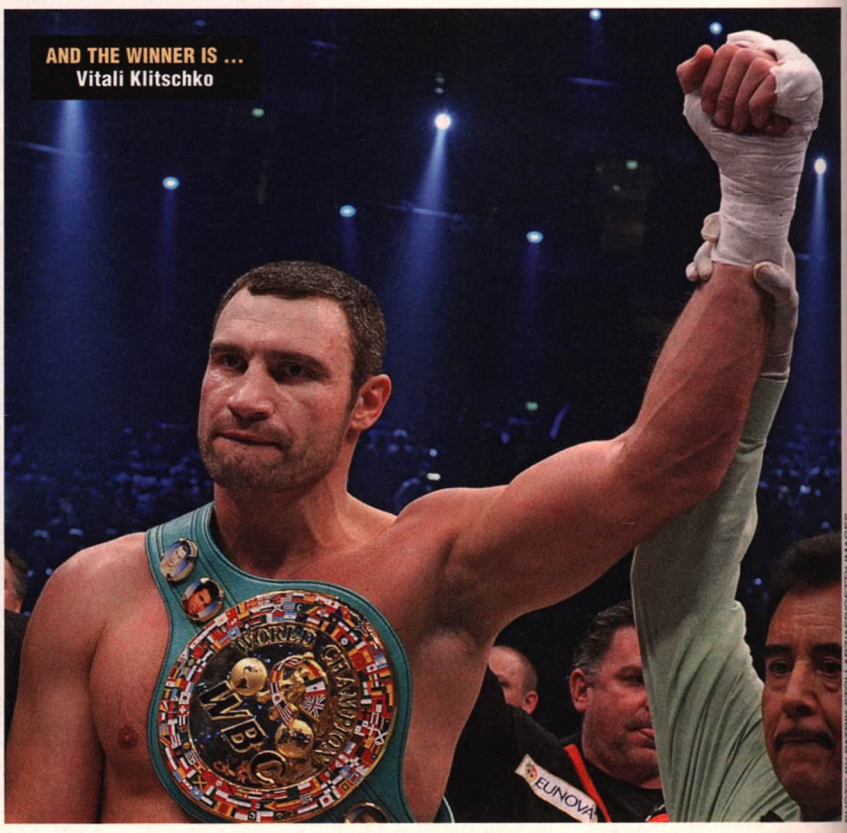
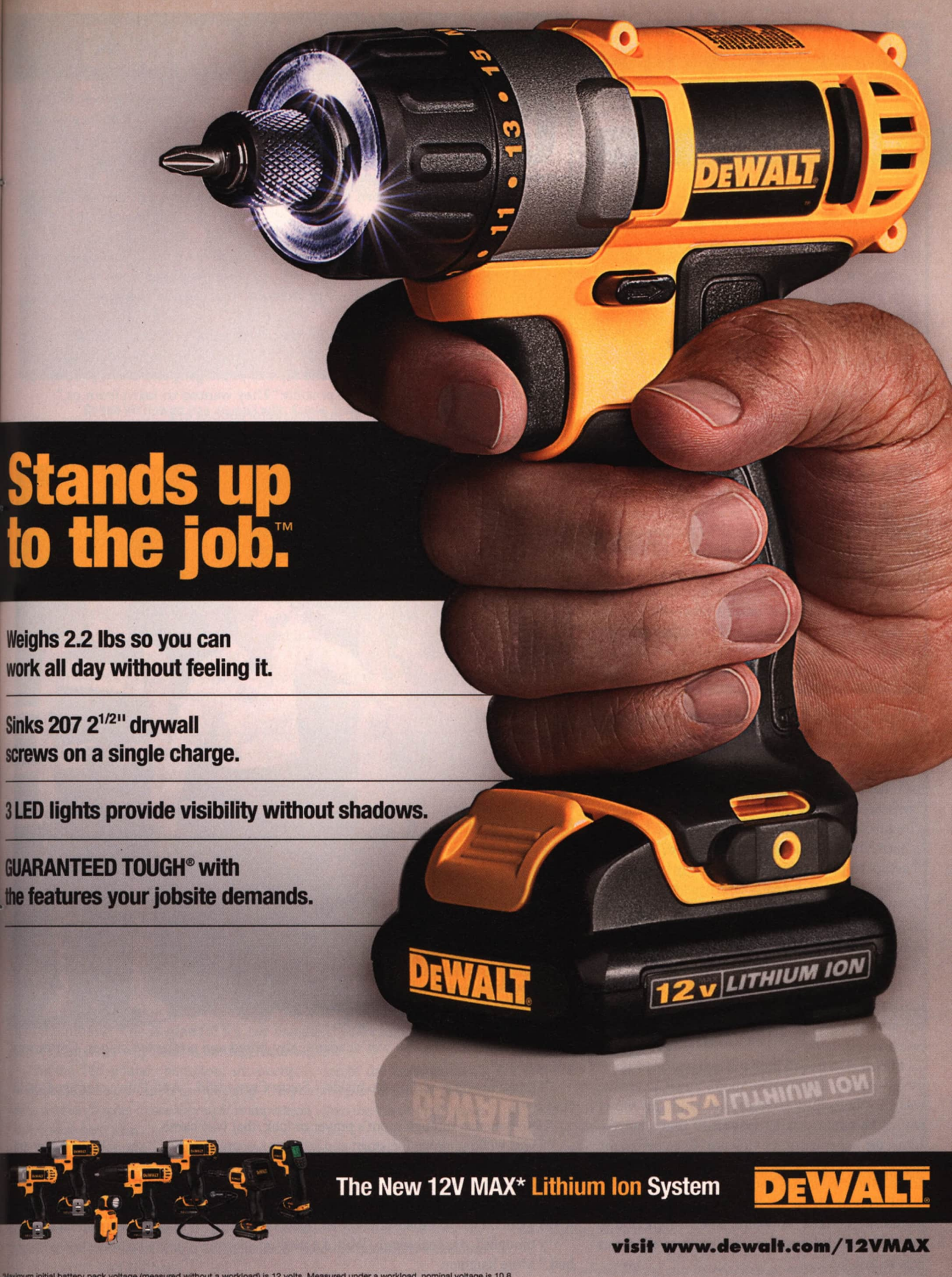


PHOTO BY PATRIK STOLLARZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



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By Michael Rivest

Franchon Crews: Swinging And Singing Her Way To The Top

She's an 11-time national and three-time international champion. The self-proclaimed "Hard-Hitting Diva" is also a fabulous singer who nearly made it to Hollywood on *American Idol*. She has two jobs, cares for her partially disabled mother, and finds time to train in the spaces between. She's a dervish of positive energy and a woman of deep religious convictions.

But say the name Franchon Crews, and the only thing some will say is: cheater! After winning the 2008 Continental Championships, Crews tested positive for a disallowed diuretic and was banned from competition for two years.

She will no longer discuss whether the substance was taken unknowingly or intentionally. "I realized over time that it doesn't matter," Crews said, with the relief of one who has found a hard-earned separate peace. "It never did matter as I reflect on it. An elite athlete is responsible to know what she's putting in her body, unknowingly or not. Period," she said. "I accept responsibility, but it broke my heart."

More than that, it nearly destroyed her.

"I was depressed. I stopped training and gained 20 pounds." The one-time celebrity in her hometown of Baltimore, Maryland, didn't even want to be seen. "People thought I had moved. I just disappeared."

Boxing had once saved Crews. Fans are accustomed to stories of the sport's transformative power but usually as it applies to men. Crews' story will broaden your horizon.

She moved from Virginia Beach to urban Baltimore with her single parent mom, Sarah, when she was 13. While divorce creates turmoil in the life of any child, many turn the sadness to anger, but, for some, the anger becomes violence. Even before the move, Crews' behavior landed her in a detention home. But after, things got worse.

"I fought all of the time," she said. "Kids would say I talked too white, and I'd fight. Other times, I wouldn't need much reason at all. I was just so lost."

HOOKS AND BOOKS

Coach Marvin McDowell knows about the transformative power of boxing. His UMAR boxing gym has been turning kids' lives around since he started it in 1996.

"Franchon is just one of our successes," said McDowall. "There are many more that just don't get famous."

"Umar is the Arabic word for 'life,'" he explained. "We put life back into the community by giving kids experiences that will last a lifetime. Boxing is just a teaching tool."

With the motto, "No Hooks Before Books," UMAR has a mandatory after-school program conducted by two certified teachers. Does it work? Their gym enjoys an 85-percent high school graduation rate; outside the gym door, it's 63 percent.

The World Trade Center Institute, an international business network based in Maryland, recently took notice of UMAR's success. "They sent a delegation from El Salvador, where they have the same type of youth gang and crime problem that Baltimore does," McDowall said, proudly. "They wanted to learn from us."

Read more about UMAR at: nohooksbeforebooks.org

GUESS WHO WON
Crews' body language tells the whole story

PHOTO BY SHOTBYOLENN

It didn't matter that she was academically gifted and a talented singer, Crews was going down.

"I knew my baby girl on the inside," Sarah Crews said. "And I always prayed she'd find a way."

Then, whether through mom's prayer or luck, that way came.

"I was walking down the street and ran into a couple of guys," she said. "I told them I wanted to be a singer but needed to lose weight."

As serendipity would have it, the two guys knew a thing or two about weight management. They were fighters from Baltimore's UMAR Boxing Program. "They told me to come to the gym. So I went because, hey, who fights better than I do, right?" she said laughing.

"I thought I was real tough. Well, I ended up sparring a guy who beat me up soooo bad." More laughter.

PHOTO BY SHOTSBYGLENN

TEACHER AND PUPIL
Coach McDowell has worked with Crews from the start

"But she just kept coming back," said Marvin McDowall, UMAR founder and Crews' coach to this day. "You could tell it was doing something for her inside. Boxing was doing more than giving her an outlet; it was like she found a voice, besides singing, to get at what was inside."

She not only got grounded; she got good.

After only four bouts, Crews was the 2004 Baltimore, MD/Washington DC Golden Gloves Champion on her way to the US Nationals. She was focused. She was disciplined. She believed in herself. She was everything she wasn't before. Then, tragedy struck.

Sarah Crews, who had always been the steadfast one for her daughter, the eye of Hurricane Franchon, was nearly killed in a brutal attack 10 feet from her front door.

"She had internal bleeding and was unresponsive," said Crews. Several strokes left her only able to speak in single, forced words for a time.

"I was supposed to leave for the Nationals," Crews said, "but there was no way I was going to leave her. I suddenly realized how much she meant to me. But she just kept saying one word over and over: 'Important! Important!' She wanted me to go."

Despite Sarah's deep Jehovah's Witness faith and its prohibitions against violence in any form, she was not blind to what boxing was doing for her daughter. She didn't approve of it, but Franchon was going to the Nationals and that was that.

"So I went and won," said Crews. The rest is history—a string of Golden Gloves, Police Athletic League, US National, and international championships.

The most recent one came this June 26, 2011, when she was crowned US National Champion for the fifth time. You see, with the help of boxing and the mother who is grateful for her daughter's care and daily visits, Crews found her way back to boxing. Saved again.

As the 165-pound champion, she occupies one of the three women's weight classes (the others are 112 and 132-pounds) that will comprise the first women boxers to see Olympic competition when the Games take place in London next year.

"She stands a very good chance in the Olympic Trials," said Christy Halbert, a US coach in several international events. "Which is rather amazing considering her two-year absence."

Unlike the men's sport, where the skill level is relatively stable, the quality of women's boxing is advancing so rapidly that being out of competition for two years would be the end for most people. "But Franchon is different," said Halbert.

2011 US NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

Colorado Springs, Colorado • June 20-25, 2011

Champions:

106 pounds/female: Amy Sowers, Bozeman, MT
108 pounds/male: David Carlton, Cincinnati, OH
***112 pounds/female:** Marlen Esparza, Houston, TX
114 pound/male: John Franklin, Fort Carson, CO
119 pounds/female: Haley Pasion, Waipahu, HI
123 pounds/male: Joseph Diaz Jr., El Monte, CA
125 pounds/female: Heather Hardy, Brooklyn, NY
132 pounds/male: Jose Ramirez, Avenal, CA
***132 pounds/female:** Queen Underwood, Seattle, WA
141 pounds/male: Semajay Thomas, Chicago, IL
141 pounds/female: Cashmere Jackson, Cleveland, OH
152 pounds/female: Stephanie Taylor, West Hills, CA
152 pounds/male: Errol Spence, Desoto, TX
***165 pounds/female:** Franchon Crews, Baltimore, MD
165 pounds/male: Chris Pearson, Trotwood, OH
178+ pounds/female: Charnita Johnson, OH
178 pounds/male: Jesse Hart, Bowie, MD
201 pounds/male: Jordan Shimmell, Hudsonville, MI
201+ pounds/male: Jonathan Hamm, St. Paul, MN

*Olympic female weight division

LAST CHANCE QUALIFIERS TOURNAMENT *

Cincinnati, Ohio • July 4-9, 2011

Champions:

108 pounds: Erros Correa, San Jose, CA
114 pounds: Shawn Simpson, Chicago, IL
123 pounds: Isaac Torres, Mission, TX
132 pounds: Raynell Williams, Cleveland, OH
141 pounds: Duran Caferro, Helena, MT
152 pounds: Amir Imam, Albany, NY
165 pounds: Luis Arias, Milwaukee, WI
178 pounds: Shaborn Ryals, Capitol Heights, MD
201 pounds: Robert Jekabson, Chicago, IL
201+ pounds: Brett Rather, Las Vegas, NV

**This tournament provides a final opportunity for all male Olympic hopefuls who have not previously qualified for the US Olympic Team Trials.*

Yeah, she's different, all right. And make no mistake—the Hard-Hitting Diva is back. ■

Michael Rivest can be reached at mrivest2@gmail.com.

THE SWEETER SCIENCE

By Chris Richards

Meet The "Killer Queen"

Amateur boxing, to paraphrase a great athlete from a very different sport, is something like a war. In war, patriotism is the defining virtue. Boxing patriotism takes the form of loyalty to gym, to neighborhood, to hometown, and to country. Lines of competition are drawn along national borders, and the great international amateur fighters are soldiers fighting for their nation's honor. Prior to her professional debut, Syuzanna "Susi" Kentikian was a soldier without an army.

Kentikian was born in Yerevan, Armenia, in 1987. In 1996, her family escaped warfare and unrest to seek safety and security in Hamburg, Germany. Safety they found, but security is in short supply when your parents live with the fear that they and their children could be thrown out of the country at any moment. On several occasions, the family was literally minutes away from being bustled onto a plane and sent home.

Boxing made the difference. Susi's first trip to a boxing gym had been to watch her brother

PASSING THE TORCH Kentikian (right) poses with Regina Halmich at the 2007 WIBF awards ceremony

PHOTO BY PATRIK STOLLARZ/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

RAOUI DESERVES A REMATCH

Nadia Raoui, 12-1-1 (3), hit the comeback trail with a unanimous decision win over Evgeniya Zablotskaya in June 2011. Zablotskaya, 3-6 (1), is hardly in the upper strata of the sport, but her losses have come against opponents with winning records. She wasn't intended to give Raoui serious trouble, but to give her rounds and confidence in her first fight after a 14-month layoff. Zablotskaya made the win an ugly one by holding on the inside and leading with her head but was unable to impress the judges.

The real significance of the win is the message it sends: Raoui isn't going anywhere despite her thin split-decision loss to Kentikian last April. Raoui was competitive from round one, landed the better punches from outside, and arguably eked out a draw against the more experienced Kentikian. Raoui's impressive performance against Kentikian speaks strongly of her talent. The question is whether two failed title challenges in 13 fights (Raoui drew with Eileen Olszewski in 2008 in her first crack at an alphabet belt) speak well of her future.

Raoui is quick-handed, mobile, and throws punches with excellent form. There is, however, room for improvement in the areas of both defense and infighting. She needs to learn to how avoid punches more frequently and be busier on the inside.

There will always be a market for talented fighters who come up short in title fights, and the first Kentikian fight was controversial enough to generate demand for a rematch. The "Beauty Beast" has told the German press that she is looking for a rematch with Kentikian before the end of this year.

The close results of the first fight suggest a rematch is even money anywhere but Kentikian's hometown of Hamburg. If Raoui fights the Armenian-born titlist in her own backyard again, she just might need a knockout to win.

PHOTO BY STUART FRANKLIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

"BEAUTY" VS. "QUEEN"
Raoui (left) roughs up Kentikian on the inside

train, but she soon proved unwilling to merely watch others fight. Kentikian's eagerness and talent were apparent to those who intervened on her family's behalf, including amateur coach Frank Rieth.

Talented or not, Kentikian was still classified as an "asylum seeker," rather than a legal resident. Being the best young female fighter in Hamburg was not enough. Four consecutive titles in the junior bracket of the Hamburg Championship and success in North German regional tournaments did not change the fact that she was not eligible to fight on the German national team. She did win a gold medal at the International German Women's Championships in 2004, and she was named the best boxer in the junior division at the tournament. But the door to the European championship was closed. No amount of local and regional success would change that.

So Kentikian turned professional in 2005. This move addressed more than one problem. Her professional income could now be counted in her favor in future attempts to gain official residency. The "Killer Queen" proved that Arbun (once the only brandy outside France to win the right to call itself "cognac") is not the only import from Yerevan to pack a punch. In February of 2007, she won her first alphabet title.

In December of the same year Kentikian won the title, Regina Halmich retired after her final fight that November. Many boxing experts were ready to crown Kentikian as the heir to Halmich's position at the top of European women's boxing.

Gauging just how well Kentikian has carried the torch is complicated by the fact that Halmich's career spanned 14 years and she held an alphabet title for 13 of them, winning the Women's International Boxing Federation (WIBF) strap in her 10th fight. Kentikian has only been a professional fighter for six years. Halmich was a technician, and Kentikian, at her best, is a ferocious brawler. Even so, those who delight in comparing fighters' resumes against the same opponents can point to Kentikian's fights with common opponents.

When American Elena Reid held Halmich to a controversial draw in September 2004, many observers felt that Reid had won. Though Halmich won a unanimous decision in the rematch, the results were still controversial among American fans. Conversely, Kentikian handed Reid a bad beating in March 2009.

Halmich won a hard-fought majority decision over Israel's Hagar Finer in her final fight. Finer gave Kentikian a very good fight a year later, but few disagreed with the unanimous tally for the German-based Armenian. On the other hand, Kentikian fought Reid four years after the Halmich rematch, and, by then, Reid was clearly past her prime.

Purists will note that Kentikian is no stranger to friendly judging either. In April 2010, she won a controversial decision over German challenger Nadia Raoui. The fight was extremely difficult to score. Simply seeing the split decision win on Kentikian's record does not tell the whole story. One headline declared: "Raoui Robbed." Former feather titlist Ina Menzer was more diplomatic, telling a German reporter that she felt the fight "was probably a draw." Menzer's careful language comes closer to the mark. It's worth noting that Raoui was born in Germany, and Kentikian's hometown decision in Hamburg shows just how "desirable" an "alien" she has become.

The climb had not been without difficulty outside the ring. Kentikian parted from longtime promoter Universum after the high-profile German promotional company lost its television contracts with German network ZDF. Her new promoter, SES Sports Events, broadcast her most recent fight via live Internet stream rather than television. Halmich was one of the most visible female athletes in Europe, and Kentikian cannot disappear from German television for too long and still lay claim to Halmich's mantle.

One positive fact is that the 23-year-old Kentikian, 28-0 (16) and 1 no-contest, still has a lot of good years ahead of her. Attractive European and international matches await. Time is on her side. ■

Chris Richards can be contacted at chris.m.richards@gmail.com.

Bodyshots:
Better To Give Than Receive

Following Bernard Hopkins dramatic 2004 stoppage of Oscar De La Hoya with a left hook to the body, De La Hoya told the media, "It's hard for someone to knock me out—never in my wildest dreams did I think I'd get stopped by a bodyshot."

In fact, some of the most memorable victories in boxing have been from bodyshots. Who can forget Micky Ward's seventh-round left hook-to-the liver knockout of Alfonso Sanchez in 1997, Virgil Hill's inability to stand after Roy Jones looped a right hand to Hill's body in 1998, or Arturo Gatti's knockout of Leo Dorin with a left hook to the body in '94? What made these punches as treacherous as a headshot?

There are several areas for a boxer to legally strike the torso: the solar plexus, the sternum, the diaphragm, the ribs, and the upper abdomen—including the liver and spleen.

The solar plexus, medically known as the celiac plexus, is a network of nerves that lies just below the tip of the sternum—the flat breastbone situated in the central portion of the chest. A blow to this area will feel as if you had the wind knocked out of you. It can also cause the diaphragm to spasm. The diaphragm is a dome-like structure and the major muscle of respiration (breathing). It separates the thoracic (upper torso) and abdomen. Diaphragm injury results in difficulty expanding the chest and limits breathing.

Direct punches to the sternum or the ribs can feel like a heart attack. Sternum or rib injury increases significantly when taking a deep breath, while heart attack pain is there regardless. If a boxer were to break a rib during a bout, the fighter might be focused on the pain, while the ring physician would be concerned about a punctured lung if the rib pieces were separated from one another.

The liver, located in the right upper quadrant of the torso, is the largest abdominal organ with a huge blood supply. The spleen is the most commonly injured abdominal organ and is on the opposite side of the liver. It produces white blood cells and filters, stores, and destroys aging red blood cells. Injury to the liver or spleen will produce severe pain, nausea/vomiting or even shoulder pain. These shots can be life-threatening as the symptoms may be missed or it may take hours to days for internal bleeding, swelling, or fever to develop. So, the boxer might absorb cumulative punches in the process and not recognize he is seriously hurt until it is too late.

Bodypunches break down muscle that is filtered through the kidneys. If an athlete doesn't receive sufficient fluids, these products clog the kidneys. This is what happened to Evander Holyfield when he captured the world cruiserweight title in 1986. Following a grueling 15-round fight against Dwight Muhammad Qawi, Holyfield was hospitalized, close to renal failure from all the bodyshots he'd absorbed. After losing a 12-round decision to Michael Moorer in 1994, Holyfield complained of left shoulder pain. To prevent a similar situation that occurred after the Qawi fight, his Georgia physician made certain Holyfield preventatively received several units of intravenous fluids at a Las Vegas hospital. On this occasion, it was too many fluids, and it contributed to a false impression that Holyfield had a heart condition.

Respected trainer James "Buddy" McGirt won the IBF junior welterweight title in

IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE
Referee Kenny Bayless counts out De La Hoya after Hopkins floored him with a bodyshot.

BATTLE OF THE BODYPUNCHERS
Gatti digs deep to Wards beltline. Both fighters were among the best bodypunchers in recent years.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

1988, defeating Frankie Warren. His victory was not without pain.

"When I won the title, I had to travel back to New Jersey," said McGirt. "When my plane landed, I needed help just getting off the plane. I pissed blood for two days. You can have a washboard stomach, but, if you get hit with the right bodyshot, you can cancel Christmas!"

McGirt relayed a story that says it all when it comes to the effects of bodyshots. The following is a PG-rated version:

"My trainer, Georgie Benton, told me after the Warren fight, 'You took a lot of bodyshots. When you go home, don't have sex—wait a week. If you get some when you go home, you'll last a minute and your body will shut down.' I had been away five weeks, so when I got home, I called the girl I had been dating; I told her not to come over. So she says, 'Why? I'm coming right over!' I go to bed, and she comes into my bedroom in a negligee … She accuses me of cheating on her! I told Georgie he was right."

McGirt believes that many of today's fighters are not properly instructed on delivering bodyshots.

"Pacquiao is a superstar, but he wins most of his fights on the outside. I don't care who you are, there will be a time in the fight you are going have to be in the trenches. The older guys know. One of the reasons Riddick Bowe was so great was that, although he was a big man, he knew how to fight on the inside. Bouie Fisher was a genius in teaching this. They need to give a clinic to the trainers. Today, you rarely meet guys that are on the inside."

McGirt says that although Jones was noted for fighting on the outside, he could finish a combination with a shot to the body. He also had high praises for the bodypunching skills of Arturo Gatti, Micky Ward, Julio Cesar Chavez, and Johnny Tapia.

Bodyshots are not to be taken lightly. Whether in training or in an actual fight, a boxer needs to recognize that their harmful effects may take hours or days to become evident and to immediately seek medical attention should there be unusual or significant pain, nausea/vomiting, blood in the urine, or trouble breathing. ■

by Jim Bagg

Hey, Hey, Haymon: Bagg's Exclusive Interview

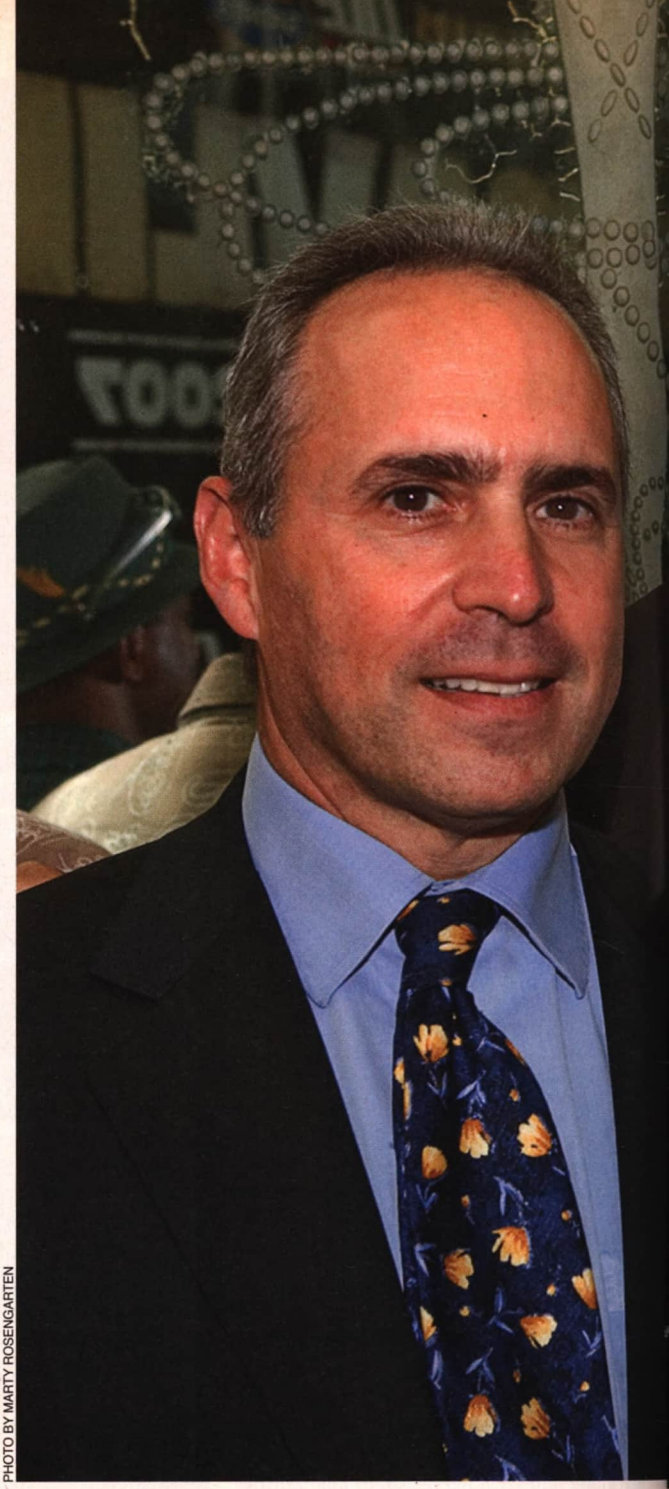


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Would you believe there are some people out there who think Al Haymon doesn't really exist? Because the guy never grants interviews and never lets his face get shown on camera, some folks think he's a fictional character. How preposterous. Well, the Baggareeno can assure you that Haymon is a real, living, breathing human, and he does give interviews if you ask him the right way. The Baggmeister used a polite, "Would you like these photos of you and Kery Davis mud wrestling to be suppressed?" and wouldn't you know, a one-on-one was arranged. The Bagg Bopper was flown via private jet to a secluded island just off the coast of Antarctica, where Haymon was waiting to conduct an exclusive Q & A that would last for as long as the Baggarooney could go without breaking Haymon's strict "no eye contact" rule. Here's the complete, unedited transcript:

Jim Bagg: Point blank, how is it possible for one man to run the entire sport of boxing?

Al Haymon: That's a ridiculous question. My right-hand man, Sam Watson, helps also.

JB: A couple of years ago, Yahoo! Sports ranked you as the fifth most powerful person in boxing. Was that a fair ranking?

AH: It's not a matter of what's fair; it's a matter of where I told Kevin Iole to rank me. Had I been ranked outside the top five, it would have looked suspicious. But I didn't want to be at the very top either because, as you know, I like to keep a low profile. So I told Iole to rank Oscar De La Hoya first and Ross Greenburg second. Those rankings seem crazy now, with one guy in rehab and the other guy having "resigned" *(Watson provided the air quotes as Haymon spoke)* from HBO. But at the time, I thought they'd be believable selections.

JB: You're an adviser to Floyd Mayweather. Do you think we'll see him fight Manny Pacquiao in 2012?

AH: I believe we will. I have a few people at the IRS and in the judiciary system that I need to speak with to make sure some problems go away, and then Pacquiao needs to agree to drain all of the blood out of his body and let us test each drop individually before injecting it back into his veins. But those are low hurdles to clear. So I expect the fight to happen. In Atlantic City.

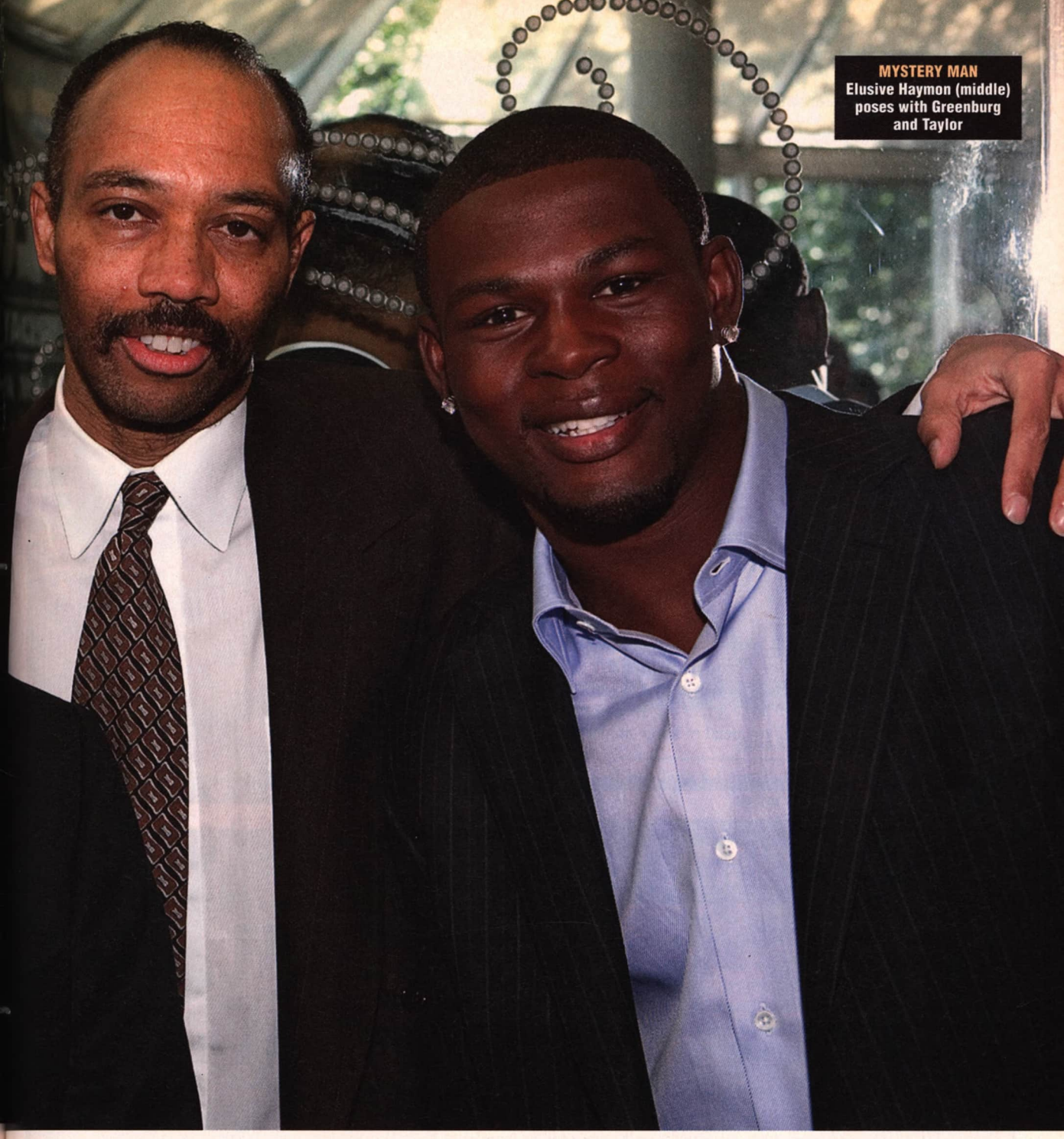
JB: Regardless of the official result, most people think Paul Williams lost his fight with Erislandy Lara. Where does Williams go from here?

AH: Before Ross Greenburg left, we had a deal agreed to in principle for Williams to face either Carlos Baldomir, Yory Boy Campas, or a random 40-year-old Hispanic man off the street for a payday of $3-million. Now, however, we're in wait-and-see mode. If Kery Davis is installed as president of HBO Sports, then I think the deal is still on, except Paul will be paid $6-million.

JB: Let's move to another one of your clients whose career has hit a bump, Andre Berto. Do you regret letting him face a real opponent in Victor Ortiz?

AH: That was a scouting error on my part, simple as that. We thought Victor Ortiz was a natural 140-pounder with no heart. If we'd known he could carry 147 so well and battle through adversity, we never would have made that fight. So I'm taking the blame on that one. Don't blame Andre. Don't pin this loss on him. He's still undefeated in my book.

JB: Jermain Taylor is coming back. This is a divisive issue, since he was knocked out in his last two fights and seemed to be mak-



MYSTERY MAN
Elusive Haymon (middle) poses with Greenburg and Taylor

ing a sound health decision in retiring. Do you support his decision to return?

AH: Would he be returning if I didn't? Have you learned nothing during the course of this interview?

JB: Sorry. Let me change subjects. Would you ever consider working with a white fighter?

AH: *(cackling maniacally)* Lord, no. But I might be willing to work with a black fighter whom Bernard Hopkins labels as relatively white.

JB: Okay, let's do some name association. The Baggnificence says a name, you say the first thing that comes to mind. First up: Lou DiBella.

AH: Good man. Big heart. Absolutely insane. To the point that he scares me sometimes.

JB: Leonard Ellerbe.

AH: Never heard of him.

JB: Chris Arreola.

AH: Handsome devil.

JB: The Klitschko brothers.

AH: If you're trying to get me to discuss how much they allegedly paid me to let them back on HBO, forget about it.

JB: Okay, last question. What is the meaning of life?

AH: I happen to have the answer to that question and can spell it out for you in great detail, but you just made eye contact with me, so I'm afraid this interview is over. This is precisely why I don't give interviews. You journalists simply don't follow commands to the letter the way the guys at HBO do.

CALL OFF YOUR LAWYERS ...

The Baggeroni was hoping to give you gnomes credit for knowledge that the Haymon interview was fictitious. Obviously, it's Bagagascar's strong satirical slant on what it might have actually been like. Getting Haymon to come out of his hole is tougher than getting a raise out of skinflint editor Nigel Collins.

David Down A Digit

You know how they say a chain is only as strong as its weakest link? (It's a quality adage, even if it begat that red-haired British hag spouting that intolerable catchphrase "You are the weakest link, goodbye!") Well, a foot is only as strong as its weakest toe. So let's all cut David Haye some slack, okay? His broken toe was a valid excuse. Without two healthy pinkie toes, you just can't expect a man to throw punches effectively.

Sure, he had the piggy that went to the market and the piggy that stayed home and the piggy that had roast beef and the piggy that had none. But he was at a major disadvantage without the piggy that went "wee-wee-wee-wee" all the way home. Wladimir Klitschko had two healthy wee-wee-wee-wee toes. Haye only had one. With a 2-1 advantage like that, Klitschko should have been able to win the fight by scores of 120-60. The fact that the average score was 117-109 tells you all you need to know about how game Haye was.

So limp aside, Willis Reed. There's a new standard bearer for bravery in the face of injury.

TOE JAM
Wladimir looks on as Haye displays his injured pinkie

PHOTO BY SCOT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

AND THE STINGRAY GOES TO ...

Grady Brewer, who checked off three key Stingray-boxes in defeating previously unbeaten Fernando Guerrero in June. First, he brought into the fight a butt-ugly record of 27-12. Second, he brought into the fight a birth certificate indicating that he'd celebrated his 40th birthday a few months prior. And third, he brought into the fight a desire to knock his man out emphatically, which is precisely what Brewer did.

When the former *Contender* winner got stopped by Erislandy Lara two fights earlier in the 10th round of a wholly one-sided beatdown, it was reasonable to assume Brewer's window of opportunity had slammed shut like the legs of the Baggapalooza's second wife from the third week of our relationship on. But somehow, at age 40, Brewer opened that window (and possibly some legs—that's his business, not the Bagginator's) and blasted out the 24-year-old Guerrero in the fourth round.

Brewer is in no way a Stingin' newbie; he'd beaten five undefeated fighters before this, most notably amateur star Anthony Thompson. But all those other Stingray-worthy wins occurred when he was in his 20s or 30s. It's different when you do it in your 40s. This month, Grady Brewer put the gray in Sting*ray*.

FORTY-YEAR-OLD STINGER
Brewer ended Guerrero's undefeated streak

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

THE MONTHLY MAILBAGG

In honor of J-Lo and that scrawny dork she used to be married to, we're focusing on the subject of divorce in this month's mailbagg. And Jen, baby, just know that for you the Baggeology would turn his undershirt inside-out so the spaghetti stain doesn't show.

Hey Baggburger,

As a veteran of many divorces, I figure you must have something to say about Jin Mosley getting three of Sugar Shane's championship belts in the divorce settlement. I know our legal system finds a way to screw the husband every time, but this is ludicrous! He earned those belts with blood and sweat, and she takes them away? Please, Baggman, tell me your ex-wives didn't do you like that!

Howie Gardner
Boulder, CO

Howie-nerschnitzel,

Rule number one of divorce proceedings: The bee-otches can't take what you don't have. What's a former Mrs. Bagg going to take half of? The vomit-stained couch? *Be my guest.* The vacuum cleaner? *You never used it when we were married, why start now?*

Shane Mosley's problem was coming into a marriage with money and possessions galore and not forcing a pre-nup down Jin's throat. The fact that she took his belts is an atrocity, but there are two reasons to look at the glass as half-full. First, the belts are supposedly ultimately going to Shane's kids, not to Jin. And second, they're just crummy alphabet belts. As long as she didn't get any of his RING belts, he shouldn't lose sleep.

In any case, I hope Mosley learned his lesson. If he ends up marrying Bella Gonzalez, he needs to pre-nup it up. If not, she'll take half of what he has left. Although, if there's any justice, that should open the door for him to at least keep one saline implant when they go their separate ways.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

CUTE COUPLE
Does Bella need a belt?

Who Won? Who Cares?

Sometimes the test of a fight's greatness is whether we give a crap who won and who lost. Baggy Ray Cyrus brings this subject up in the aftermath of the hematoma-tastic Delvin Rodriguez-Pawel Wolak brawl. It was a close, competitive fight, and a draw verdict wasn't a total atrocity. Surely, a draw was better than the judges finding a way to give Wolak the win. But it's still kinda hard to find anyone other than those two judges who gave Wolak five rounds. Maybe Rodriguez didn't dominate Wolak, but, almost to a man, everyone watching thought D-Rod deserved to win.

And yet nobody really complained afterward. That's how you know it was a special little fight. The thrills it provided and the emotions it stirred outweighed such details as what the official result was.

One of the great modern examples of this phenomenon was the first Micky Ward-Arturo Gatti fight, which most on press row scored closely for Gatti, yet not a single postfight story led with the decision. If a fight stinks, like, say, Oscar De La Hoya vs. Felix Trinidad or the first Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield fight, you'd better believe the controversial outcome is getting mentioned in the opening paragraph.

The one exception to this rule is the first Erik Morales-Marco Antonio Barrera fight, which was a classic war with a terrible decision, and the decision served to sully the brilliance of the affair—at least in the moment. After some time had passed, Dalby Shirley's incompetence mattered less, and the fight was rightly named Fight of the Year by every respectable publication.

PHOTO BY ED DILLER/STAR BOXING

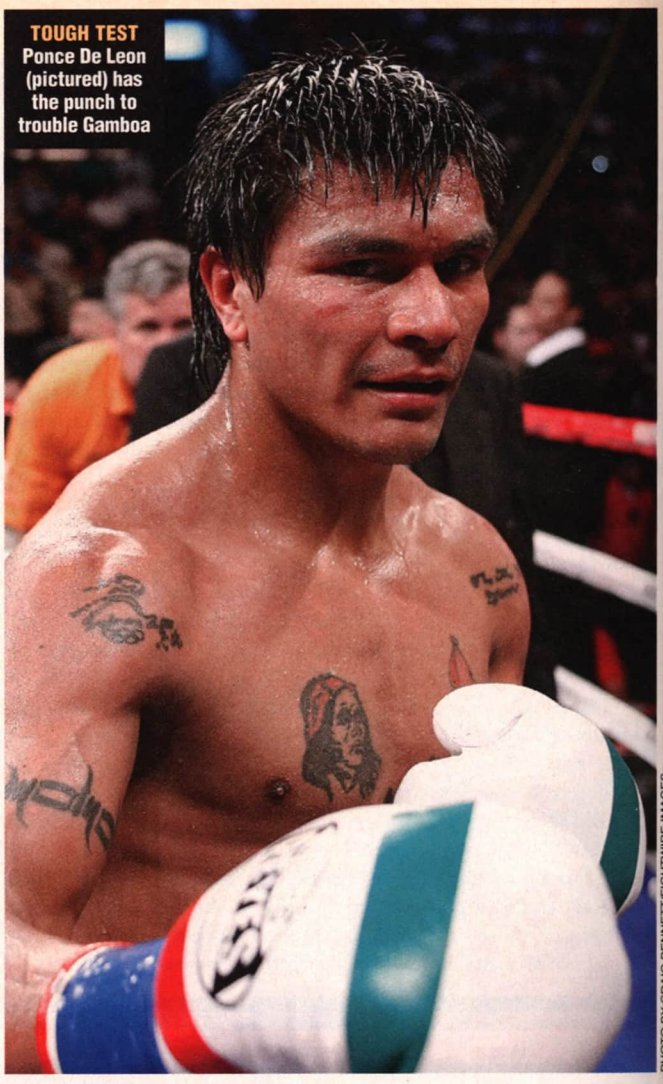
INSTANT CLASSIC
Wolak and Rodriguez go to war

Anyway, congratulations to Delvin Rodriguez on a tremendous performance worthy of a victory and to Pawel Wolak on a performance so gutsy that viewers didn't begrudge him getting lucky. Sometimes, it's not whether you win or lose; it's how you play the game while your eye is mutating into a second head. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

By William Dettloff

Ponce De Leon To Test Gamboa



TOUGH TEST
Ponce De Leon (pictured) has the punch to trouble Gamboa

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

The prodigiously talented featherweight **Yuriorkis Gamboa**, who saw a likely superfight evaporate when rival **Juan Manuel Lopez** lost to **Orlando Salido** last April, will bide his time against Mexican power puncher **Daniel Ponce De Leon** on September 10 in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in an HBO main event.

One would suspect that Yuriorkis, THE RING's top-ranked 126-pounder, will be rooting hard for Lopez to turn the tables on Salido when the two meet again, reportedly in October or November. Gamboa, after all, has already beaten Salido, and quite convincingly at that, and, even with his undefeated record gone, Lopez remains perhaps the biggest attraction in the featherweight division. A match between the two would still do brisk business.

Chris John and **Mikey Garcia** are the other undefeated featherweights in the top 10 that could prove interesting for Gamboa, 20-1 (16), but John isn't known enough in the United States (despite his two fights against **Rocky Juarez**), and Garcia, though promising, clearly isn't ready for such a drastic jump in the quality of his opposition. That leaves De Leon, 41-3 (34), who lost a fairly poorly received decision against **Adrien Broner** on the **Saul Alvarez-Matthew Hatton** undercard in March.

Some would see it as a sort of gift that De Leon, whom THE RING ranks fifth at featherweight, would receive a shot at Gamboa's alphabet titles despite the loss to Broner, but it remains that he will go in a considerable underdog; Gamboa has adequately demonstrated (most notably against **Rogers Mtagwa**) that he is both faster and more powerful than Lopez, who stopped De Leon in less than a round in June 2008. Some gift!

Still, and to his credit, De Leon remains one of the game's purest punchers and would have opened as a livelier underdog if he were facing the Gamboa of a couple years ago. That Gamboa was more reckless and therefore more susceptible to De Leon's clubbing punches.

As it is, Ponce De Leon had won seven fights in a row before losing the decision to Broner by scores of 99-91 and 96-94 (twice). In his next fight, Broner stopped upstart **Jason Litzau** in the first round.

It is of lesser importance, but worth noting nevertheless, that the match will represent the first time promoters Top Rank and Golden Boy Promotions will have worked together since **Manny Pacquiao** and **Ricky Hatton** met, briefly, in 2009.

The feud between the sport's two biggest promotional companies ended in May when a mediator helped the sides settle their myriad and seemingly irreconcilable differences, the most important of which involved the defamation lawsuit Top Rank filed against **Richard Schaefer** and **Oscar De La Hoya** after they accused Pacquiao of using performance-enhancing drugs. Schaefer and De La Hoya publicly apologized, Top Rank dropped the lawsuit, and Gamboa-De Leon was made soon thereafter.

"I am looking forward to working with Top Rank on this promotion," Schaefer said. "**Bob [Arum]** and I shook hands and made a commitment to work together again if the right fight presents itself. This is the case here." ■

LISTEN UP

Just when you thought world middleweight champion and pound-for-pound guy **Sergio Martinez** was ready to follow up his wins over **Paul Williams** and **Sergei Dzinrizuk** with something even bigger, along comes little-known challenger **Darren Barker**, who will challenge Martinez on October 1 in Atlantic City on HBO. Barker, 23-0 (14), holds the British Commonwealth middleweight title.

This will be Barker's first fight in the United States and his second outside the United Kingdom. He stopped **Larry Sharpe** in Alberta, Canada, in 2008.

"There is a great series of movies [called] *Rocky*," Barker said at the press conference announcing the fight. "They captured the mentality of the underdog. If the favorite always won in sport, it wouldn't be any fun. I'm here to prove that the underdog can cause a massive upset. So, you may not know who I am now, but come October 1, you will know exactly who 'Dazzling' Darren Barker is."

According to **Lou DiBella**, Martinez' promoter, the fight was put together in about 20 minutes—over Twitter. "**Eddie Hearn** (Barker's promoter) and I basically did the negotiations over Twitter, DiBella said. "This might be the first major fight ever made over Twitter." Let's see if they've started a trend.

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